

THE  
POEMS  
OF  
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HENRY  
SAVAGE

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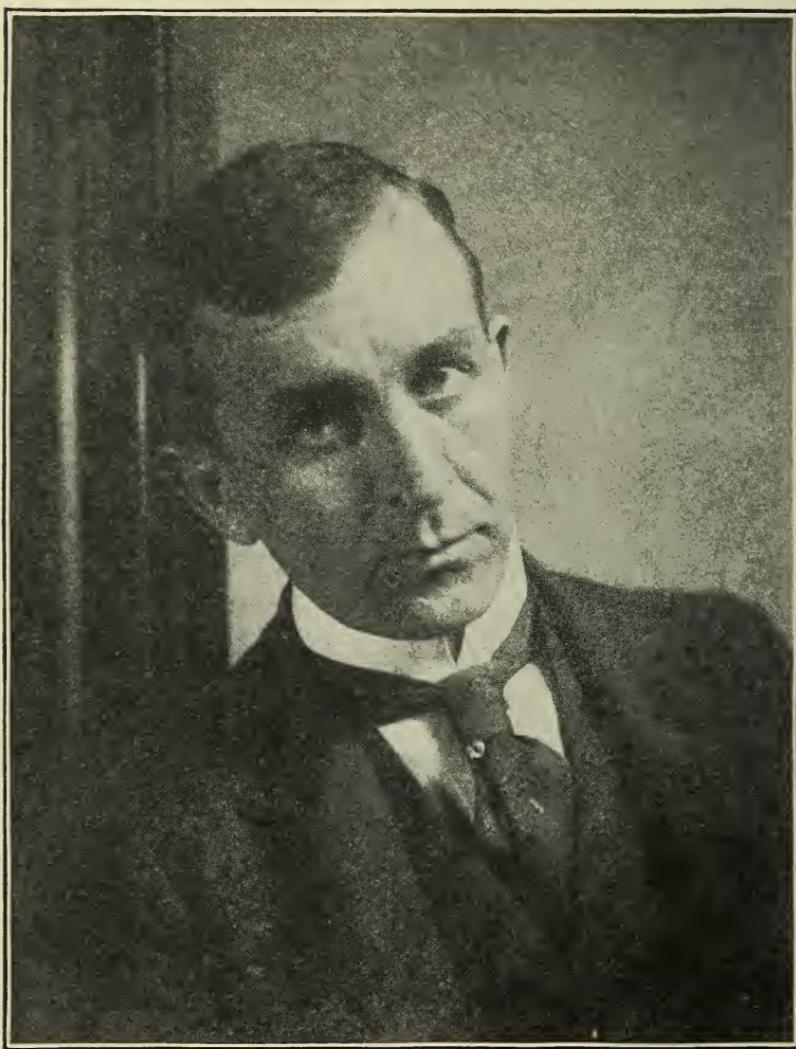




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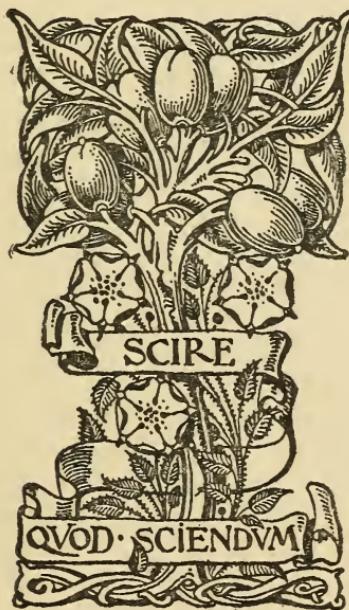




O.H. Mayo

THE POEMS  
OF  
PHILIP HENRY SAVAGE

*Edited, with an Introduction, by*  
DANIEL GREGORY MASON



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## PREFACE

Philip Henry Savage published, during his lifetime, two small books of verse, FIRST POEMS AND FRAGMENTS, which appeared in 1895, and POEMS, issued in 1898. The present volume is a reprint of these books, with the addition of the best poems found in his portfolio after his death. Of the posthumous poems a few, marred by imperfections of sense or of versification, have been slightly pruned; but omissions have been in each case indicated by asterisks. The reader may rest assured that Savage's intentions have not been tampered with, though it is of course often questionable whether he himself would have considered fragmentary pieces worth printing at all. The Editor's plan has been not to omit a characteristic piece merely because of flaws, nor on the other hand to print anything that does not in some way contribute to the total impression of the writer's personality. Some poems written before the publication of the two books and included in neither, have been admitted because they seemed to contribute to that impression.

The frontispiece portrait is from a negative taken by the Editor during the winter preceding Savage's death. It has been chosen for reproduction here, in spite of its exaggeration of the sadness of his face and its scant justice

## PREFACE

*to his good looks, because, on the whole, it gives his expression, at once tentative and serious, rather more vividly than any other. It has much more value as a mental than as a physical portrait.*

*The Editor wishes to express here his appreciation of the unfailing courtesy and generosity of his friend's family in putting papers at his disposal, and in every way forwarding his work.*

# CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION, by Daniel Gregory Mason . . . . .	xv

## FIRST POEMS & FRAGMENTS

[1895]

DEDICATION: TO GERTRUDE SAVAGE . . . . .	xxxvii
APOLOGY . . . . .	xxxix

## SHORTER POEMS

“ ‘Tis grace to sing to nature, and to pray ” . . . . .	3
“ Even in the city, I ” . . . . .	3
“ When I look on Ossipee ” . . . . .	4
“ Upon a pasture hill a pine-tree stands ” . . . . .	4
“ What know I of the fields of fall ” . . . . .	5
“ The sea is silent round this rocky shore ” . . . . .	7
“ When February sun shines cold ” . . . . .	8
“ Still, in the meadow by the brook I lay ” . . . . .	9
“ In the first pale flush of even ” . . . . .	9
“ When evening comes and shadows gray ” . . . . .	10
“ With all the soul within me and suppressed ” . . . . .	11
“ I love to walk against the yellow light ” . . . . .	12
“ The flash of sunlight from a bit of glass ” . . . . .	13
“ The influences of air and sky ” . . . . .	14
“ A lark flew by upon the air ” . . . . .	15
“ This is thy brother, this poor silver fish ” . . . . .	16
“ Far in the south the redwings hear and speed ” . . . . .	17
“ Thou little god within the brook ” . . . . .	17
“ Where man has conquered nature dies ” . . . . .	18

## CONTENTS

### *SHORTER POEMS, continued*

	PAGE
“The breath of slowly-moving spring” . . . . .	19
“Something in the sense of morning” . . . . .	19
“The road ran sloping through the trees” . . . . .	20
“I stood at the hedge as a hearse went by” . . . . .	22
“The scream of the tern in the roar of the waters” . . . . .	23
“Like a dead leaf that rolls along the ground” . . . . .	24
“Adam arose at the word of God” . . . . .	25
“In long, slow silences of soul” . . . . .	25
“If ever I have thought or said” . . . . .	26

### *LONGER POEMS*

A New England Mountain . . . . .	31
Near the White Ledge, Sandwich, N. H. . . . .	32
“I left the city” . . . . .	35
The Song-Sparrow . . . . .	38
In Cherry Lane . . . . .	40
Woodstock . . . . .	42
The Hedgerow . . . . .	47
Solitude . . . . .	50
Putatis Lucum Ligna . . . . .	54

### *SONNETS*

“The flood of life that turned away” . . . . .	59
“Ten thousand fancies flitting through the mind” . . . . .	60
“Mercy! Justice! Ah, no! Heaven’s gate! Heaven’s gate!” . . . . .	61
“I love the hills but she the open shore” . . . . .	62
“I cannot face the utterance of a prayer” . . . . .	63
“To catch at that which never can be caught” . . . . .	64
“A month ago the cloud alone was fair” . . . . .	65
“A thousand flowerets of a thousand hues” . . . . .	66
“I stood long time and listened to the wind” . . . . .	67
Moosilauke in December . . . . .	68

## CONTENTS

### *SONNETS, continued*

**PAGE**

“The poet stoops and plucks a little flower” . . . . .	72
“I hate the vast array of ‘modern’ things” . . . . .	73
“High on a sunward-mounting precipice” . . . . .	74
“Honey of woodland wild and of the hill” . . . . .	75
“The warm, moist kiss of April on the grass” . . . . .	76
“I laid upon a rock beside the sea” . . . . .	77

### *FRAGMENTS*

“In the low-lying April afternoon” . . . . .	81
“Westward I walked ; the sun was low ; the plain” . . . . .	82
“The wild-eyed, savage gull, with bow’d wing, tips” . . . . .	83
“At sunset in the college close the light” . . . . .	84
“When the low sun descends on Hamlet hill” . . . . .	85

## P O E M S

[1898]

DEDICATION : To CITRIODORA . . . . .	89
“Spinoza polished glasses clear” . . . . .	91
“If one should call my branching verse” . . . . .	91
“Brother, Time is a thing how slight” . . . . .	91
“‘Believe in me !’ Lord, who art thou” . . . . .	92
March 20 . . . . .	92
The Sparrow . . . . .	94
Presto . . . . .	95
In Dove Cottage Garden . . . . .	96
A Wreath of Buds and Lavender . . . . .	98
Sweet Thorn . . . . .	98
Silkweed . . . . .	99
The Fire-Fly . . . . .	101
Clear and Far . . . . .	101
Architecture . . . . .	102

## CONTENTS

	PAGE
To a Pine-Tree . . . . .	103
Opal . . . . .	103
Morning . . . . .	104
“I know not what it is, but when I pass ”.	104
Anadyomene . . . . .	105
Processional . . . . .	110
To a Bull-Frog . . . . .	111
Rose in Gray . . . . .	112
To Flowers . . . . .	113
On Coming of Age . . . . .	114
“It is long waiting for the dear companions”.	114
“Mary, when the wild-rose” . . . . .	115
In a Garden . . . . .	116
Neptunian . . . . .	118
Shakespeare . . . . .	119
The Water-Clock . . . . .	120
“We welcome lightly and with ease” . . . . .	120
In August . . . . .	120
Dog-Days . . . . .	121
“Through rain the forest, roof and floor” . . . . .	122
Fagots . . . . .	122
October 10 . . . . .	123
“God, thou art good, but not to me” . . . . .	123
The Pine-Tree . . . . .	124
“I dare not think that thou art by, to stand” . . . . .	125
The Anchor . . . . .	126
“The frost has walked across my world” . . . . .	126
The Quiet Harvest . . . . .	127
The Maple-Tree . . . . .	127
In Memoriam. — Patsey . . . . .	128
“The ivy leaves, (behind the shed)” . . . . .	129
Greek and Christian . . . . .	129
Dissolution . . . . .	130
November . . . . .	130
Against Forgiveness . . . . .	131

## CONTENTS

	PAGE
Confession . . . . .	131
November-Blind . . . . .	133
Winter a Cavern . . . . .	134
On a Weed, uncovered by the Rains in December . . . . .	134
December . . . . .	134
Isaiah vi: 13 . . . . .	135
New England . . . . .	136
Serene . . . . .	137
“From Billerica forth I send” . . . . .	137

## POSTHUMOUS POEMS

[ 1901 ]

“Not all the world can banish from my eyes” . . . . .	141
For March 20 . . . . .	141
“The faithful mullein, day by day” . . . . .	142
A March Flaw . . . . .	142
“Here by the brimming April streams” . . . . .	143
“The bobolink that sweetly sings” . . . . .	144
Apple-Blossoms . . . . .	144
“Roll down, roll down, thou darkling earth” . . . . .	146
“Hot days like this will wound or bless” . . . . .	146
“Worn with the city, out I go” . . . . .	147
October 10 . . . . .	148
On the Tenth of October . . . . .	148
“Up from hill and meadow burning” . . . . .	149
“Three camping grounds I passed to-day” . . . . .	149
Prayer for Grace . . . . .	150
In November . . . . .	150
“What is this stone, unless some cry” . . . . .	152
“A beetle bug has bit my coat” . . . . .	152
“What hard, bright Spirit sits beyond the stars” . . . . .	153
David and Jonathan . . . . .	154

## CONTENTS

	PAGE
The Mystic . . . . .	154
“When the last candle is put out” . . . . .	155
“What are the limitations hard” . . . . .	155
To G. S. (on a postal card) . . . . .	156
The Chickadee’s Song . . . . .	157
To G. S. . . . .	158
To G. S. . . . .	159
To H. L. S. . . . .	159
“There are women in London and Paris and Rome” . . . . .	160
“Day by day along the street” . . . . .	161
“The world is crossed at sixes and at sevens” . . . . .	162
“Love is a life you cannot trace” . . . . .	163
“The spring has not so many flowers” . . . . .	163
“Dear heart, that in this world must live and die” . . . . .	163
“The hollow chambers of the moon” . . . . .	164
“The shad-bush, sweetheart, is in flower” . . . . .	164
“Wreck of the winter upcast into April” . . . . .	164
“My sisters have their loves, but I” . . . . .	165
Red Rose and White . . . . .	166
“I mark you coming the accustomed way” . . . . .	167
“The extreme beauty and the dear delight” . . . . .	167
“I laugh for the long days I see ahead” . . . . .	168
Fragment of a Sonnet . . . . .	169
“When Love dies, and the funeral plumes are set” . . . . .	169
“Swampscott over the eastern sea” . . . . .	170

## INTRODUCTION





## INTRODUCTION

THERE is no flower so difficult to dissect, so impossible to reconstruct, as the personality of a man. It defies analysis ; as fast as we pluck apart its petals, their perfume exhales and they are left withered in our hands. When I first undertook to write, for the final edition of his poems, a short memoir of Philip Henry Savage, I little realized the elusiveness of the task. It seemed easy and pleasant to communicate to others my deep and lasting impression of my friend. But soon I found that his friendship was a possession I could not share, his gentle, strong personality a presence in my life that was after all incomunicable. His feminine perception, so sensitive to beauty and so rich in tact ; his courageous manliness, daring to probe the grisliest places in life ; his pure ardency of spirit ; his gayety and quaintness of humor ; his wide hospitality of mind ; his stern and yet pagan personal ideal : all these elements made up a personality that might perhaps be suggested, but never could be livingly reproduced. He was young when he died ; he developed slowly ; his last year of life, when his poetic faculty was much more perfect than ever before, was a time of distraction and anxiety : so that even his poetry, a mirror of his very self for those who knew him, reflects him for others but brokenly and vaguely. But if I cannot hope that the most discerning

## INTRODUCTION

reader will discover completely the man behind the poems, yet my task here must be to aid, however slightly, such a quest. I shall outline in the following pages the salient features of Savage's mind and spirit,—features which, combined as nature knew how to combine them, revealed one of the best men I have known.

At first meeting, one saw that Savage was a man of refinement and of personal dignity, that he cherished ideals and respected himself. He seemed what we call a quiet man, though he always talked enough and with grace; his presence was bright and cheerfully courteous rather than brilliant. Gradually, deeper qualities revealed themselves. His steady blue eyes reassured one, his slender yet vigorous figure gave one a sense of manliness and fidelity. His face, with its rough-textured skin, well creased and of a sallow or ashen color, reinforced the impression of strength, and suggested, in spite of its mobility, a physical temperament of the melancholy type. Yet, so shifting were his moods and so responsive his features, an instant could turn sadness into expectancy, or fill the serious eyes with banter. His mind seemed to demand of his body a greater pliancy of expression than had been given it, its proper quality being strength rather than delicacy. In spite of the sensitiveness that was clearly written on every feature, it might be said that he would have been physically almost apathetic had he not been mentally so alert. And his talk emphasized the same contradiction. Though his voice was dull and unvibrant, and his enunciation indistinct, his pleasure in talking was so obvious, and his quaint doublings and sudden interjections and apostrophes and parentheses and self-interruptions so novel and characteristic, that

## INTRODUCTION

one loved to listen to him. Nor must I forget his little mannerisms and airs,—how he would cuff one foot against the other as he stood in the doorway, in depreciation or mock apology ; how he would throw one hand into the air with a sudden exclamation ; how in an evening walk, giving no warning, he would suddenly deafen us with a wild and hollow Indian war-whoop. In a thousand ways he had a knack of making his moods real to others, of enlivening them with his curious and lovable whims.

But Savage's social charm is interesting to us here chiefly because, like a vapor that exhales from a volatile liquid, it suggests what deeper quality permeated his mind and gave it its flavor. In the analysis we have promised ourselves, the first consideration must be this deeper quality of sensitiveness.

His every word and act was a revelation, now superficial, now profound, of his really feminine purity and delicacy of perception. It spoke alike in his quick sense of the moods of others and in his most exalted delight in natural beauty, though perhaps the latter was its more primal expression. One cannot read three pages of his book without seeing what a passionate disciple the beauty of the world found in him. His first word is

“ Even in the city, I  
Am ever conscious of the sky ” ;

and he returns to the same thought in the six lines that introduce the posthumous poems :

“ Not all the world can banish from my eyes  
The simple glories of the day’s sunrise ;

## INTRODUCTION

Not circumstance nor fate e'er drive away  
The clear perfection of one summer day,  
Nor blot quite wholly from my sight  
The singing tumult of the mystic night."

The accuracy of his insight is unfailing ; and whether he describes the forest which "through rain is green as it was ne'er before," or the early winter sun which "lays by every stem a hue most sagely, delicately blue," his page always reflects the object with fidelity and with the finest precision. Even the *First Poems and Fragments*, prosaic and diffuse as they often are, frequently charm us with a touch of this delicate observation. And his notebooks and letters are full of scribbled memoranda that want only manipulation to make them into poems. Here is a botanical note in verse, found in the portfolio :

" Sand hill violets are pale  
Like the sunny innocents,  
Like the evening primrose frail,  
Wanting wholly the intense  
Azure of the cousin-flower that stands  
In the fertile bottom lands."

And in letters I find the following characteristic bits of description :

" There is a little family of two — sparrows — nested in a sheltered angle of the water-spout on the house opposite my side-window ; not thirty feet from me now. They are companions of mine, chirping early and late ; happy ; waiting for the eggs to hatch. . . . Busy, busy, busy, about the fundamental things. N'est-ce pas ? "

" I just had the finest hour of the autumn. I rode from Cambridge, in this wild wind out of the sunset ;

## INTRODUCTION

and I'm going back after dinner, and home again at eleven. The Harvard Bridge is a rare spot, and the ducks like the river as well as I."

The half-boyish delight he took in the world of out-of-doors was so highly characteristic of him (little as it seems to comport with the sombre tone of his verses, so full of an Omar-like sense of the fleetingness of life) that it deserves illustration in a longer letter describing a July day on Mirror Lake in Wolfborough :

"DEAR ——: We were up at three. At 3.05, though the room was so light I needed no candle to dress, I could not distinguish my red (right) garter from my black (left), which surprised me. A whippoorwill shouted busily, just under my window. He, besides the frog which sings all night long 'u-ung' like Neddie, is the only distinctive night-bird. We were on the lake an hour before sunrise, which was to-day at 4.29. The white lilies were unopened as I paddled the canoe among them. Shortly after venturing out irregular twitterings began in the low copse where the high white eastern light penetrated. The hills, Ossipee, began to show a glowing purplish hue. A bank of cloud over the sun (below the horizon) grew rosy with a sharp infusion of dust-color. From that time on this cloud was the centre of attention, and its whole progression was from the color named above through ever more brilliant golden rose, to so sharp and hot a metal that even before the edge of the sun himself appeared it was dazzling and overpowering to the eye.

"Troops of white mist came out of the shallow bay and moved in procession like the spirits among whom Fran-

## INTRODUCTION

cesca was borne, down the lake in ever-diminishing line. They were a continual presence till long after the sun appeared, whether we turned to watch the bream on their nests under the shallow wake, or noted how the yet white light refracted into varying color on clouds and hills. Then through the flashing lights the fire itself was born.

“ Roll down, roll down, O night-enfolded, dewy earth,  
And wash thee clean in the east where the crystal waves  
of light

Sweep from the mystical deep to the roseate throes of birth,  
Wake and redeem and transfigure the children of night.

• • • • •  
“ The afternoon saw a tramp through a sphagnum swamp, sleep, and the completion of a further arc of the shore. The evening twilight was soft and gray, through a curtain of clouds ; with color, yellow and saffron to rose, to the west of Ossipee toward the Sandwich Mountains. Supper on a sand-beach facing west ; and after, a long contemplation, while the fagots crumbled and fell. We left a little rosy heap on the sands, shining in the face of the late twilight. It was dark when we reached the plank wharf ; we had taken seventeen hours to go round the lake two and a half miles.

• • • • •  
“ Oceans, awake ! and hills ; ye lakes and slumbrous valleys,  
Over ye all and the city’s roofs, and the darkened town,  
Through the empurple air from the wealth of his aureate  
chalice,  
Lo ! the sun has poured a magical influence down.

Hooray !

PHILIP.”

## INTRODUCTION

As would be expected, Savage's sensitiveness to natural beauty involved pain as well as pleasure, in so far as he was constrained to an artificial and "civilized" life. There resulted a disharmony which he recognized now laughingly, now with sorrow. The reader cannot but have been struck with the undertone of sadness in the lines already quoted from the posthumous poems; and the same distaste of drudgery is quaintly voiced in a stray quatrain:

"Brick sidewalks and the stony street  
Make weary walking for the Muse.  
I cannot blame her halting feet; —  
God knows they were not meant for shoes."

Equally whimsical and equally sincere is a plaint Savage wrote from his office in the Public Library during alterations made there one muggy August:

"DEAR ——: Observe the commercial method of dating this sheet, and realize the pace at which I began it. I now breathe three times and start anew.

"You cannot write too often. I love your letters, if I may say so; and you can have no idea how they come like a strain of music across the dull blows of iron hammer on granite which are the trunk and branch of the vibrations I hear. In the Library, truly, where plaster and granite-dust float like a palpable, visible atmosphere, the heavens and the earth (forgive me) are one flour."

The same sensitiveness that made Savage so responsive to natural beauty gave him a very tender sympathy with people. All his friends remember how prehensile he was,

## INTRODUCTION

how he never obtruded his own mood, but felt about for the mood of his companion. He had the liveliest interest for our fortunes and misfortunes, and his counsel, though always bracing and tonic, was never hard or self-blinded. His sympathy with men does not voice itself in the poems, to be sure, so eloquently as the scarcely less personal sympathy he felt with nature. He himself writes regretfully :

“I keep with loving eye and ear  
Attention on the changing year.  
I cannot bid in numbers flow  
The human passions that I know ;  
Nor weave into the lyric line  
The sacrificial heart divine ;  
Be mine the shame, the burden mine.”

But even if the self-impeachment shadow a truth, it is a partial truth, and one far less applicable to his later than to his earlier work. In one of the poems to “G. S.” there is keen appreciation of the “sacrificial heart divine,” even if the lines into which it is woven lack something of lyric fire. And in the poem beginning “Day by day along the street,” written several years later, the beauty of the style matches the tenderness of the emotion. The love-poems at the end of the book, also, are an earnest of what he might have done in this sort, had he lived.

But if we do not find that Savage’s delicate perception failed him at any point, this does not mean that adverse criticism is not both possible and necessary. It is possible, because like others he had the defects of his qualities : it is necessary, because faults are the natural shadows that give body to virtues, and a portrait painted with high

## INTRODUCTION

lights alone will show a mere Sir Charles Grandison, both flat to look at and unprofitable to contemplate. Savage's mind, then, like many minds that act chiefly by intuition, was weak in logical power, unable to develop a long train of thought with sequence and coherence. His conversation was scrappy and unmortared ; he brought out his thoughts singly, with little reference to what had just been said ; minds that were strong where his was weak found talk with him baffling and unsatisfying. On the other hand, for those who did not demand sustained grasp, but accepted insight in its stead, he talked always with charm, and often persuasively. Like the heroine in the fairy story, his mouth dropped diamonds, and they were not less bright because they did not form a necklace. His exclamations and interjections and sudden turnings were delightful to us ; we used to rejoice in his “‘asides,” self-admonitory or abusive. “‘Tut, tut, Savage,’ he would cry, in the midst of something else, and cuff his feet together. Non-sequaciousness, however, was no doubt a more serious handicap to him in his writing : it was the infirmity which circumscribed his work to the short lyric form he cultivated with such success ; every effort he made in the direction of larger outlines or more ambitious schemes was disappointing. He could not sustain and vitalize a long poem. Thoughts would not stay dissolved in his mind, but quickly formed into isolated crystals. They were perfect, but they were small. Still, it would be foolish to insist too much on the negative aspect. We have only to reverse our emphasis to see that, even if they were small, they were perfect. And then we shall accept Savage as a miniaturist, a worker in precious stones, just as we have accepted Her-

## INTRODUCTION

rick and other kindred geniuses, not demanding of them a breadth of which they are incapable.

The reader should not infer, either from what I have said of Savage's logical shortcomings, or from my insistence upon his basically feminine qualities of mind, that there was about him any trace of the effeminate, any tendency to the feeble or the flabby. His weaknesses were intellectual rather than sentimental. They were the negative weaknesses of limitation, not the positive weaknesses of morbidness or sentimentality. Manliness reveals itself in sanity and balance of mind as well as in the main force we generally associate with it, and his manliness was of this sort, giving his smallest poems a tone of such solidity and health that we may without paradox apply to them the word "large." If a man have healthy and governed sense, his mental processes may be as intuitive as a woman's and we shall only admire the more that rare interaction of powers that produces an individuality at once finely sensitive and thoroughly wholesome. And if we needed any further testimony than we have in his poems that Savage's sensuous appreciations were thus made wholesome by a steady spiritual control, we could find it in a formulation of the principle of such control which he gives in his note-book.

"In order to enjoy life," he says, "one must be a master of life. In order to enjoy the senses one must be a master of them. No ordinary pleasure is so great but its rejection serves to throw out into relief this greater; no task so stern but that endurance is sterner; no pain so fierce but it wakes the soul to secret laughter."

"In another mood, the kiss of the senses is beautiful beyond all and every abstraction; the touch of sunlight,

## INTRODUCTION

the glory of form and color, the magic of sound, the joy of human embraces, the passion of sex.

"These two moods are the great rhythmical heart-beat, the systole and diastole of human life. The one a gathering of materials from all the realms of beauty, the other a consumption of them to feed the most perfect flame. The one centrifugal, the other centripetal."

If Savage was feminine in his appreciation for beauty, if he was feminine also in his logical and constructive limitation, he was masculine in healthiness and normality of sense, and he was nobly masculine in that sort of spiritual enthusiasm which made him hold himself above the very gratifications that appealed so potently to one-half his nature, in order to give a perfect allegiance to its central authority.

Such is a brief analysis of the permanent and stable characteristics of the man. Now that it is made, however, we see only the more clearly that any such static analysis, especially of a personality so fluid, so evolving, so dynamic as Savage's, must be in the end unsatisfying. More characteristic of him than any trait that we can describe was the lapse, the flow, the ceaseless recrystallization of traits. His growth was not uniform, as in men of less quickness of mind, but many-sided, various, and unforeseen, like the ramifications of ice-crystals on a window-pane. So impressible was he, his development was almost as complex as the outer influences affecting him. He reacted on his environment, as the learned say, with unusual delicacy. Furthermore, he added to this native impressibility the habit of pondering his impressions. Meditation shaped his life nearly as much as circum-

## INTRODUCTION

stance. Very remarkable was his intellectual alertness ; he analyzed his feelings, returned upon his experiences, and perennially chewed the cud of introspection. Whether to dwell in the country or in the city ; whether to mix with people or to take much solitude ; whether to be a pagan or a Christian ; what to renounce and whether to renounce anything, — these were problems that he recognized and grappled. Of the tirelessness of his thinking the jottings and memoranda in his note-books give a forcible impression. I select a few examples almost at random :

“I must break up my year into sections, and live according to season.

“Study the map for a tramp.

“I never take a step in the woods but I stop, jealous of advance, lest I lose some part of the joy and significance in beauty of each outward movement. Mystery and unexplained delight.

“Don’t waste your spirit in impatience.

“I thought of Thoreau, and took my courage tight between my teeth.

“Every morning now I ought to sit at my desk.

“Now is the time to begin to walk, and with the notebook. Remember that hawk, and the ease with which the thoughts took form with him in sight — all gone now, alas !

“A continual quick shift between vital personal relationships and verse.

“Master of a little beauty which, because it is born and bearer of the divine essence, I will cherish at the expense of most of the concerns of life.”

Savage’s outward actions, again, bear witness to the same combination of sensibility and introspection, pro-

## INTRODUCTION

ducing his characteristic eclecticism. They were very various, and their variety resulted not from confusion or from deficient self-control, but from a deliberate desire to live sensitively, responsively. His idea was to trust the ultimate harmony of his instincts ; each was to be obeyed as it revealed itself, and all were to produce an unconstrained evolution. From day to day he faced and interrogated the bewildering complex of a youth's experience: observing, comparing, recording ; conversing, reading, pondering ; experimenting, practising, attempting. All his doings, at first sight surprisingly diverse, fall, when looked at as illustrating this eclecticism, into the unity of a series of educative experiences. Each was dictated by some inward necessity, some craving to be satisfied, some knowledge to be supplied, some weakness to be trained into strength.

Born in 1868, he did not enter Harvard College until 1889, that is, until he was already of age, but spent the years from '86 to '89 in business. For these three years he was what is technically known as a "drummer" of boots and shoes. He wrote home to his family, from remote towns in Maine or Pennsylvania, long letters in which news of the shoe business is oddly mingled with descriptive bits about sunsets and red-winged blackbirds. Of course the life was ultimately impossible for him, and getting from it a good deal of experience of some kinds of people he gave it up and entered college. Here he was shy and quiet, studious, friendly with but a few fellows of tastes like his own. He had developed little of the social skill which marked him later ; he was thinking out the problems of the conduct of life, and of his art, literature. So seriously

## INTRODUCTION

did he take the former that for a year after graduation he studied divinity. Several of his sermons have been saved,—compositions which afford glimpses of his courage and manliness, through an atmosphere of conventional and rather prosaic piety. It was fortunate for him that he abandoned this profession. Though undoubtedly his ethical enthusiasm would have found expression in it, his mind was both too pagan and too original to attain free play in any organization; he was foreordained an intellectual free-lance. His next venture was more native. Becoming what he called a vagabond, he lived a free and outdoor life, a life of loving study of sky and forest as well as of books and men. That this life agreed with him we may assume from the appearance, in 1895, of his *First Poems and Fragments*.

Yet the other side of his nature, what I may call the moral side, soon demanded that he again relate himself to society by some more recognized service than poetry. He set about discovering how he might earn bread without sacrificing that other intangible possession that we are told is equally necessary to life. He strove faithfully to combine bread-winning with ideal-winning, or, in the expressive commonplace, to “keep body and soul together.” He wished to be a worthy citizen of society, and yet he saw not how to be one without treason to his highest interests. It is a dilemma with which idealists are familiar. In all the rest of his life he was assaulting and reassaulting it, using against it all the ingenuity and courage and patience and hope he had, and leaving it unsolved when he died.

In '95-'96 he was an assistant instructor in English at Harvard, carrying on at the same time graduate

## INTRODUCTION

courses in composition and literature. The next year he was about to accept a similar post at the Institute of Technology, when he was offered the position of Secretary to the Librarian of the Boston Public Library. This he accepted, and held until his death three years later, working to such good effect that in 1899 he was made Clerk of the Corporation, and still managing in spare hours to produce the small but perfect book, the *Poems* of 1898. On the last day of May, 1899, he was suddenly taken with appendicitis, and after an illness of less than a week, died on June 4th, at the Massachusetts General Hospital.

It is easy enough to point out the disadvantageous effect of Savage's quicksilver-like mobility upon his life. He was not safeguarded by the usual limitations of interest from dissipating his energies. He cared so deeply for so many things that it was difficult for him to concentrate his forces on one undertaking. He read very widely, and blamed himself that he did not go even farther afield. All sorts of life appealed to him. At heart he desired, I think, to be at once a poet, a man of action, an athlete, a philosopher, a man of the world or of society, and a solitary thinker. He never brought himself to sacrifice all activities but one. Yet, although success is difficult to him who will not accept such a sacrifice, the very sensitiveness of enthusiasm that made Savage unable to give up anything is itself noble. It is his strength as well as his weakness. Without it he might have accomplished more; it is questionable whether he would have been as much.

If Savage's note-books and the events of his life show thus clearly the impressibility and the habit of self-

## INTRODUCTION

consideration that combined to make him eclectic, his poetical work is a third and even more striking testimony. The astonishing improvement found on comparing his first with his second volume was the fruit of conscious effort. It proceeded from a ceaseless exercise of taste, which is a faculty dependent on permeability to impressions and the habit of reflecting upon them. It is interesting to find Savage, while still in college, discovering for himself, and writing to his younger sister, that “what is true and beautiful is absolute ; and what is stupendous and gorgeous and impressive and wonderful is inferior to it.” It is interesting to find him awaking to the error of his first conceptions of literary art, and feeling out, at first helplessly, for sounder methods. In the autumn of 1895 he writes to a friend :

“DEAR —— : I am the most unhappy man of men ! Because I see, though this only now and again, how hopelessly weak was my ancient theory, that genius might be left to train itself, that original power in a man could express itself without education. You know that I practically believed that.

“To-day I am taking English 5, 2, and Anglo-Saxon in Cambridge, and marking special reports in English 9. My realest reason for going back was because I wanted to take some strong medicine, to take ——’s censures with my eyes open, and find if I could not come out from under the cloud.

“Do you know what I mean by ‘cloud’ ? I feel sometimes as though it were choking me,—I see other men in full career, coherent, strong, fluent, their power of expression running even with their conception—

## INTRODUCTION

while I labor and fail. The paltry inspiration that is in some of the *First Poems* does not comfort me. Where are power and beauty? Where, indeed, are simple purity and grace? Why, I hate most of those pieces! And yet I cannot see beyond them, nor take any clear step onward. I feel (again) like a man in the jungle; the ground under foot is a tangle of grass, the way ahead a tangle of vine and branch, the sky overhead obscured by the closely set tops of trees. I thought to fly over it all; to-day I must cut my way, and I have only a poor pen-knife! This is sincere, I do not anticipate any denial on your part, nor crave it. If I learn wisdom as the year goes by, I'll write it out and send you."

We know from his later work that Savage did in time learn wisdom, did find "simple purity and grace," but it was only by indefatigable application of his native taste. It will be interesting to analyze his progress in some little detail.

The evolution in his work is of two kinds: the advance in style from diffuse prosaicism to crystalline compactness, and the advance in thought from traditional theology to the independence and originality and courage of such pieces as "Believe in me" and "God, Thou art Good." The advance in style, in a sense the more important, since he was a lyrist rather than a thinker, he made by applying to everything he wrote his naturally keen sense for diction. How delicate and ardent was his love for words! He notes in his journal Thoreau's passion for the crystalline words in the language, such as "serene" and "ethereal"; it was a passion he shared. One summer he ransacked the first letters of the diction-

## INTRODUCTION

ary, growing as enthusiastic as a child with a new toy at the discovery of such words as "azure," "alert," "aura," "ashen." When a friend sent him a sprig of everlasting, with a comment on the dignity of the words "everlasting" and "morning," he wrote a new stanza for his poem *Processional* in order to introduce them. A sentence in his note-book suggests the source of many of his own finest effects: "The gracious quality of beauty comes like a bloom on words simple and specific." As time went on, he adopted a more and more laborious mode of composition, bringing a rigorous self-criticism to bear upon his originally keen instincts. His later note-books are webbed and networked with revisions and variants. It is surprising to see him developing one of his perfect couplets out of a weak, commonplace germ. Two examples must suffice. The last couplet of *March 20*,

"Praise God I see them and can say,  
Another year, another day!"

was at first

"And I some little time will stay  
And mark them as I do to-day."

And from the comically prosaic lines

"Thus covertly, and day by day,  
My hours advance, my hair turns gray,"

grew the plain and noble couplet in the last stanza of *Fagots*,

"Thus covertly, and term by term,  
Like as the year, I grow infirm."

## INTRODUCTION

By such means, testing and rejecting and deliberating and revising, he gave his verse its fine compression, its elegance of phrase, its harmony of tone and symmetry of proportion.

Equally great, though less noticeable, was the advance he achieved in thought. Very open and fearless must be the mind which can in a few years think itself out of a stereotyped conventionality in belief and a shy isolation in action, into an independent, humane philosophy, and a gracious, cordial intercourse with men. Savage's invaluable habit of getting face to face with his impressions and interrogating them with unprejudiced curiosity vitalized his entire intellectual life, and disentangled him from tradition, to found him firmly upon truth. But further insistence on a fact so obvious is unnecessary. No reader can doubt Savage's originality, his mental self-dependence. What might be doubted by some is the efficacy of his beliefs, their fundamental worth for the purposes of life. Many people are fond of saying that all the results of a young man's untrammelled thinking are "very pretty, but unpractical," meaning useless in the stress of experience. Such thinking, they affirm, leads to opinions charming enough as conversational and literary ornaments, but hollow and brittle for any ultimate uses of the spirit. Savage's did not prove so. When he came to his early death, and it was necessary to leave his unfinished work and the friends he loved, he found his truth still true, and could reconcile death with the philosophy life had given him.

If we can fix our eyes, not on his fragmentary doings and his imperfect work, in which he shares the lot of all, and on his untimely death, which has the look of a

## INTRODUCTION

peculiarly cruel and empty fatality, but rather on his steady allegiance to ideal aims, on the quenchless courage with which he lived and died, we shall feel that he achieved his end after all, and that he does not so much need our pity as command our gratitude. For he was one of the faithful. He labored without misgiving, and when he had to die laid down his life with the same spirit of trust that had been his strength in meeting it. His friends, and those who can divine what he was, will in their thought of him quickly come to forget the incompleteness of his life and the insufficieney of his expression, and remember only that he is one of that great company whose faith and faithfulness have served the ideal.

D. G. M.

BOSTON, November, 1900.

FIRST POEMS & FRAGMENTS



A. D. MDCCCXCV



TO GERTRUDE SAVAGE

*A winding water onward flows,  
And whither, only ocean knows ;  
Happy the crystal source that lies  
Reflecting in its heart the skies.*



## APOLOGY

**B**E more concrete, immediate to man !  
So did he counsel me, the sage; and I,  
Taking for naught the gentle guidances  
Of nature, who in all my life before  
Had lived unconscious, leaving much to her,  
I cast her out; so I forgot the sky  
And turned my eyes into the heart of man.  
But poetry is a swift, unconscious growth,  
Springs native where it may, and ever lives  
The child of impulse unaware and wild;  
And passion many times must rise and fall  
And much of life be lived before the word  
Spring up to utterance and demand a birth.  
So was I barren many days and so  
I doubted him, the sage and moralist ;  
Therefore at last I claimed again the days  
When I was not so much and nature more,  
When beauty rose, if beauty it were, and clothed  
A happy impulse or a strong desire  
In forms and colors native to the time.



SHORTER POEMS  
I - XXVIII





## I

'T IS grace to sing to nature, and to pray  
The God of nature, out of His large heart,  
To grant us knowledge of His human way;  
This is the whole of nature and of art.

## II

EVEN in the city, I  
Am ever conscious of the sky;  
A portion of its frame no less  
Than in the open wilderness.  
The stars are in my heart by night;  
I sing beneath the opening light,  
As envious of the bird; I live  
Upon the pavement, yet I give  
My soul to every growing tree  
That in the narrow ways I see.  
My heart is in the blade of grass  
Within the courtyard where I pass;  
And the small, half-discovered cloud  
Compels me till I cry aloud.  
I am the wind that beats the walls  
And wanders trembling till it falls;  
The snow, the summer rain am I,  
In close communion with the sky.

## FIRST POEMS & FRAGMENTS

### III

WHEN I look on Ossipee  
Not the hill alone I see;  
Not the hill I see to-day  
Fair and large and distant gray,  
But a mountain richly bright,  
Shining with eternal light.  
Fashioned in a fearful past,  
Born to be while life shall last,  
Yet I fear thee not, but know  
Thou shalt ever with me go.  
I shall see thee, I shall find  
The vision ever in the mind,  
Given to me one happy hour  
And received by me in power;  
I shall never know the day  
When thy touch has passed away;  
For thy spirit, Ossipee,  
Has become a part of me.

### IV

UPON a pasture hill a pine-tree stands  
And in the air holds up its slender hands;  
A double sheep-track turns beneath the tree,  
Dips to the firs, and seeks the meadow lands.

## SHORTER POEMS

The sun is setting ; slowly, one by one,  
Faint breaths of wind along the branches run ;  
    The quiet of the hills is on the air  
And on the earth beneath a quiet sun.

In contrast with the sky a gray stone wall  
Is black beneath the orange light ; and all  
    The earth is black ; never so black the earth  
As underneath a sunset sky in fall.

The pine-tree's plumy branches make a net  
And hold the light of heaven ; and nearer yet,  
    Cold in the unfeatured blackness of the ground,  
Up-springs a ray from some hid rivulet,

Deep in the pasture hummocks at my feet ;  
I hear its icy ripple, low and sweet ;  
    No other sound ; but in the air, unheard,  
I hear the pulse of winter coldly beat.

## V

WHAT know I of the fields of fall,  
    The autumn days beyond the town ?  
I do not hear the harvest-call,  
    I do not see the pastures brown ;

## FIRST POEMS & FRAGMENTS

The upland sloping to the down,  
With corn-shocks leaning on the wall;  
And golden ground-fruit shining through it all.

They tell me of the violet  
Upon the hill, bare at the crest;  
Of the autumnal primrose set  
Deep where the banks protect it best;  
Of summer fallow fields now drest  
In green; of meadows deep and wet;  
Ah! I have seen and I shall not forget!

Where stubble-fields give way to fern  
In meadows where the water lies,  
I've seen the sharp-flamed sumac burn  
And flash its fires before my eyes.  
Faint pictures of the river rise  
With blowing mist beyond the turn;  
Of lean November forests bare and stern.

I once have seen; and all the kind  
Stood round me in that happy year;  
In one bright impulse of the mind  
I was the centre of the sphere;  
The spring and summer centred here  
On autumn; winter stood behind  
And beckoned, whispering in the smoky wind.

## SHORTER POEMS

### VI

THE sea is silent round this rocky shore;  
The forest wind  
From the loud level beach behind  
Brings rolling up the distant water's roar.

Silent the wheeling sea-gull in the air,  
Without a cry;  
Far off beneath the bending sky  
A silent ship goes down the ocean stair.

The sea is blue, the sky is white with cloud,  
The land is white;  
The seaward rocks are shining bright,  
Enwrapped in a white, salt, and icy shroud.

The weeds and bushes bare above the snow,  
Against the sun  
Hold up brave stems, and many a one  
Has February bits of bud to show.

Where roses grew in one wild garden-close  
I pulled away  
A pair of rose-hips for to-day;  
Memorial to the mistress of the rose.

## FIRST POEMS & FRAGMENTS

### VII

WHEN February sun shines cold  
There comes a day when in the air  
The wings of winter slow unfold  
And show the golden summer there.

Dead ivy on the winter wall  
Is glowing with an April light ;  
And all the wreckage of the fall  
Above the snow comes into sight.

By a green rock beneath the pines  
Are shadows blue along the snow.  
Above the silent sun the lines  
Of cloud in white procession go.

A bloom is on the forest tops  
Of red light bursting through the brown.  
The ice awakes, and silver drops  
Come through the meadow stealing down.

The sky is hushed ; beneath the trees  
Where silence and night have birth,  
I heard the sunset whisper, Peace !  
Peace, Peace ! the gods are on the earth.

## SHORTER POEMS

### VIII

**S**TILL, in the meadow by the brook I lay  
And felt the April creep along my streams,  
Subdue my currents to herself and play  
At hide-and-seek with winter in my dreams.

Rich in the summer day the time is rife  
With all an eager fancy will contrive ;  
But April welcomes each new shock of life  
The sluggard winter from the heart to drive.

Thus did I tremble at the passing bird,  
Leaped in the sun and with the breezes ran,  
My heart a brook, and all my life a word  
To tell how near to nature is a man.

### IX

**I**N the first pale flush of even  
When the sun is hardly down,  
Ere the stars are in the heaven,  
Ere the shadows turn to brown ;

When the eastern sky is darkened  
And the zenith still is blue,

## FIRST POEMS & FRAGMENTS

I have stood and dimly hearkened  
To the falling of the dew.

I have stood within the hollow  
By low, rolling hummocks made,  
Close beside a sloping fallow  
In the bottom of a glade,

While the west was slowly dying ;  
And the dark east followed fast,  
Swarming over, swiftly flying  
Till the world was overcast,

Downward, past the dim horizon  
Till the valley filled with night,  
And the cool earth-whisper rising,  
Filled me with a wild delight !

Let the day go by to even.  
Hark ! the distant vespers' toll.  
When the sun is set in heaven  
It is sunrise in the soul.

## X

WHEN evening comes and shadows gray  
Steal out across the glimmering bay  
And tremble in the air between ;

## SHORTER POEMS

When evening comes and shadows green  
Are shaken down across the moor  
From willow-trees along the shore;

When evening stoops across the hill  
Towards the sunset glowing still  
And fills the hollow glens with shade;

When evening gathers in the glade;  
And all the little beasts now run  
That erst were hidden from the sun;

Then do I hear the footsteps fall  
That bitter day hears not at all;  
Then is the sunset like a door  
That leads me on to more and more,  
Till in the quietness of night  
I find a freedom and a light  
Eternal such as nowhere glows  
From any sun that ever rose.

## XI

WITH all the soul within me and suppressed  
Before the sunset, heard I, and confessed,  
A breath of God from out the whispered hand  
Held o'er the lips of the great speaking west.

## FIRST POEMS & FRAGMENTS

Heard it, and all the soul within me burned !  
Heard it, and wondered at the secret learned ;  
    And all the busy accidents of life  
O'erwhelmed it then ; it never has returned.

Thus once the doors of heaven wide open stand ;  
The voice is heard, of promise or command ;  
    Is seen the gleam ; and then the portals close  
And nature grows again upon the land.

## XII

I LOVE to walk against the yellow light,  
The lemon-yellow of the first daylight,  
    When cold and clear above the frozen earth  
The white sun rises far down to the right.

And then to think of life is very sweet ;  
The shackles fall and drop about one's feet ;  
    Till in the clear forgetfulness of morn  
It seems the world and life are all complete.

## SHORTER POEMS

'T is good to be forgotten and forget;  
To look upon the sun and so beget  
A golden present, and a past that's free,  
A little time, of memory and regret.

And when one strikes and stumbles on a stone,  
And turns to find the wingèd fancies flown —  
Yet through the passages of life that day  
Will run a radiance other than its own.

### XIII

THE flash of sunlight from a bit of glass  
Has often power to stop me as I pass ;  
And when I turn into the burning west  
I fling me down upon the sunny grass,  
  
Silent. I tell not all the little things  
That fly to me and give my spirit wings ;  
The black-eyed bird, the cloud, the silver leaf,  
The valley wind that passes as it sings.

And when the sun descending from the height,  
Seeks in the sunken west the bath of night,  
Wrapped in the darkling mantle of the sky  
I wander forth and seek a new delight.

## FIRST POEMS & FRAGMENTS

### XIV

THE influences of air and sky  
Are side lights from the eternal throne  
That fall upon the watchful eye  
    Of him who silent waits, alone,  
    And crown him master of his own.  
He knows the beauty of the rose;  
The central sun, the farthest star he knows.

The balance of a blade of grass,  
    The winds that in the meadows run,  
Gathering incense as they pass  
    To offer to the thronèd sun ;  
    The trembling secret to be won  
From every running stream ; all these  
Are his, yet force him, silent, to his knees.

The watcher shall possess the earth  
    In silence, leaping to control  
In moments mighty with the birth  
    Of passion, when the eternal soul  
        Shall wholly bind him to the whole.  
The air, the sky, the winds, the rose,  
Are his; the earth, and God Himself he knows.

To H. F. L.

## SHORTER POEMS

### XV

A LARK flew by upon the air  
And struck a red leaf from the tree,  
There where he lighted; and a pair  
Of robins bore him company.  
And I, I looked across the lea,  
Across the autumn uplands bare,  
Then turned again and saw him sitting there.

Thy life is mine, thou meadow-lark;  
Within thy golden breast I feel  
My own heart beating, and I hark  
And hear thy voice upon me steal,  
Winning my own; and past repeal  
I give myself to thee and mark  
These few words here upon this maple's bark:

That "I am Thou and Thou art I;"  
Cutting it deep that it may show  
To future years; and, by and by,  
When, as the tree shall lofty grow,  
The woodman comes to lay it low,  
This word shall stand before his eye,  
That "I am Thou," writ clear, "and Thou art I."

## FIRST POEMS & FRAGMENTS

### XVI

**T**HIS is thy brother, this poor silver fish,  
Close to the surface, dying in his dish ;  
Thy flesh, thy beating heart, thy very life ;  
All this, I say, art thou, against thy wish.

Thou mayst not turn away, thou shalt allow  
The truth, nor shalt thou dare to question how :  
There is but one great heart in nature beating,  
And this is thy heart, this, I say, art thou.

In all thy power and all thy pettiness,  
With this and that poor selfish purpose, this  
And that high-climbing fancy, and a heart  
Caught into heaven or cast in the abyss,

Thou art the same with all the little earth,  
A little part ; and sympathy of birth  
Shall tell thee, and thine openness of soul,  
What fear is death and what a life is worth.

## SHORTER POEMS

### XVII

FAIR in the south the redwings hear and speed  
To answer nature's far-heard northern cry ;  
Swift from the fields they gather and take on  
The burden of a journey ; young and old  
Swing upward to the sun as if the need  
Of earth and of her comfort were gone by.  
And guided by the star of memory run  
Upon the trembling air ; if, losing hold,  
With weary wing one settle to the land ;  
If, sideways glancing from the flight, one see  
A fairer light than hope, or faltering  
Another answer to the white command  
Hurled upward from the gun : yet joyfully  
The happy flight speeds onward with the spring.

### XVIII

THOU little god within the brook  
That dwellest, friend of man,  
I oft have heard the simple prayer  
Thou tellest unto Pan :  
  
That he who comes with rod and line  
And robs thy life to-day,  
May yet by the great god be taught  
To come some other way.

## FIRST POEMS & FRAGMENTS

### XIX

WHERE man has conquered nature dies;  
We shift some slender-growing pine  
From out her own familiar skies

Where-under forests fall and rise,  
To pots and gardens, then repine  
That where man conquers nature dies.

The atmosphere that round her lies  
Bears not the light that used to shine  
From out her own familiar skies,

She is a stranger. So our eyes  
Run o'er the world and seek a sign!  
If where man conquers nature dies

What is our earthly paradise?  
Will nature there withhold the wine  
That from her own familiar skies

She used to pour? Do we devise  
A garden earth and say, in fine,  
Where man has conquered nature dies  
From out her own familiar skies?

## SHORTER POEMS

### XX

**T**HE breath of slowly-moving spring  
Stirs the light leaf, the doubtful wing,  
And tempers each created thing.

The tumult of the summer's life  
Surrounds the earth and, rich and rife,  
Finds outlet in a world of strife.

The autumn season stills the plain,  
Quiets the river, sifts the grain,  
And looks to rest and sleep again.

In winter does great nature rest  
Or die, dismissing every guest  
And closing up the broad earth's breast.

### XXI

“**S**OMETHING in the sense of morning  
Lifts the heart up to the sun.”  
In our youth we may be pagan,  
God is many, and the One  
Great Supreme will wait till evening  
When our little day is done:  
Something in the sense of morning  
Lifts the heart up to the sun!

## FIRST POEMS & FRAGMENTS

### XXII

THE road ran sloping through the trees  
Below the dusty hill ;  
The sun, swept inward by the breeze,  
Lightened the running rill.

Maples and chestnuts stood along  
And autumn, at the prime,  
Strewed nuts and leafage that belong  
To this September time.

One tree was green beside the way,  
A small white pine, I thought ;  
And there a broken branch and gray  
Within a fork had caught.

It showed unlovely on the tree  
As dark and dead it lay ;  
“ And in my spleen I smiled ” to see  
That symbol of decay.

But my companion did not show  
Such sympathy as mine !  
He mounted up the tree, to throw  
Its burden from the pine.

## SHORTER POEMS

I cried, "Why will you not believe  
That nature's ways suffice  
To nature's purposes and leave  
Her to her own device?

"She knows her purpose for the pine  
And does not need the aid  
Of wisdom such as yours and mine  
In plans which she has made."

He cast it down and answered, "Why,  
Ev'n as I am a man,  
In doing this, believe me, I  
Am part of nature's plan!"

I smiled again but not in joy,  
In fear; for where it lay,  
The branches covered, to destroy,  
A purple aster spray!

My friend was pleased; not he divined  
That though he was a man,  
To be content we must be blind;  
For *such* is nature's plan.

## FIRST POEMS & FRAGMENTS

### XXIII

I STOOD at the hedge as a hearse went by  
And passed me along the way;  
The sun broke in through a silver sky  
And scattered a golden ray.

Should I offer a prayer for the passing dead,  
For the hearts going burdened by;  
With a human pity, a catholic dread  
Of the tear, the sorrow, and sigh?

I too knew grief and the burdened heart,  
Some knowledge of pain was mine;  
Should I bow my head for another's smart,  
Should I make this simple sign?

So I wondered and thought as the hearse went by  
With its poor dead corpse within;  
But I turned aside to the opening sky —  
“ Such a feeling may once have been,

“ But now ” — for the impulse was gone, you see,  
And death was no longer new;  
“ Like a fallen leaf from an autumn tree  
He is dead; what is else to do ? ”

## SHORTER POEMS

And there on the path as I turned around,  
By the side of a thorn-tree root  
An earthworm lay, crushed into the ground  
By the heel of a passing boot.

Well, death and death ; 't is an equal term.  
For the worm and the man to-day ;  
But I turned and buried the angle-worm  
In a neighboring lump of clay.

## XXIV

THE scream of the tern in the roar of the  
waters  
Will sound when the tumult of nature is o'er ;  
When the garden of earth is a home for the  
daughters  
Of Eve, and when Pan is remembered no more.

White-winged, he appears ! Dark, erratic, uneven,  
A figure on earth of the stars in the sky ;  
Of high disarray and disorder in heaven,  
Where the Galaxy strikes with dismay on the  
eye !

## FIRST POEMS & FRAGMENTS

Where freak and caprice build a wild conflagration,  
Where Chaos is king over torrents of stars ;  
Who scatters the earth in a blind indignation,  
And systems are sped in interminate wars.

Then the children of Pan in that day will come  
singing,  
In fierceness, of him who has set in the spheres  
Dismay ; and along the salt sea-limits ringing,  
The scream of the tern striking wild on their ears.

### XXV

LIKE a dead leaf that rolls along the ground,  
Driven by a wind that wanders round and round,  
I see my heart, with edges cut and curled,  
Like a dead leaf that 's driven without a sound.

Green faded into red, and red to brown ;  
Life to decay, and death the latest crown !  
So is my life, and lacks the heart of power  
Here to lift up the god that 's fallen down.

Alas ! why, in the days of mighty Jah,  
Did I pull down thy pillars, Asherah ?  
Baäl, where art thou ? Egypt, even thou  
Hadst faith for me beneath the wings of Ptah !

## SHORTER POEMS

### XXVI

A DAM arose at the word of God,  
Up-borne on the bosom of all the earth ;  
Brother of trees and the black, prone sod ;  
The same in death and the same in birth.

Is it divine, the mystery ?  
Is the whisper true of the hidden word  
That sounds for some in hill and sea,  
In the lapse of life when the deeps are heard ?

The sunlight lifts in the soul of man  
The white-light torch of another dawn ;  
And love will finger a mystic span,  
When the chords are drawn.

### XXVII

IN long, slow silences of soul  
Beneath the sunset on the sea  
I think I hear the numbers roll  
That tell my conquest over thee ;

When thou art gentle and serene,  
Thyself, forgotten all thy pride ;

## FIRST POEMS & FRAGMENTS

And I, myself as I have been,  
A hero with his sword untried,

Able for mastery ; and the game  
Is offered and the action up ;  
And to my purpose true I claim  
A hot draught from the stirrup-cup,

Then entertain thee. All my soul  
Awakes upon the sunset sea  
When high and clear the numbers roll  
That tell my conquest over thee.

### XXVIII

**I**F ever I have thought or said  
In all the seasons of the past  
One word at which thy heart has bled  
Believe me, it will be the last.

The tides of life are deep and wide,  
The currents swift to bear apart  
E'en kindred ships ; but from thy side  
I pray my sail may never start.

If, in the turning day and night  
Of this our earth, our little year,

## SHORTER POEMS

Thou shalt have lost me from thy sight  
Across the checkered spaces drear,

Thy words are uttered ; and the mind  
Accustomed, cannot all forget ;  
While written in my heart I find  
An impulse that is deeper yet.

We love but never know the things,  
To value them, that nearest stand.  
The heart that travels seaward brings  
The dearest treasure home to land.

To M. J. S.



LONGER POEMS

I - VII





## I

## A NEW ENGLAND MOUNTAIN

WESTMORELAND and the hills of Cum-  
berland,

Though Alps may overpeer them, have a name  
Unperishing while the earth still bears in man  
The blossom of a high-aspiring mind ;  
For Wordsworth loved them. And the sacred  
poet

Helvetia lacks not, nor old-age Japan,  
A poet whose song above the fields of tea,  
Above the temples to the figured god  
Ancient in beauty set against the ascent,  
Rises supreme to where above them all  
Uplifts a hollow summit white with snow  
Pale Fuji-san, and there in music builds  
A temple sheer in beauty to the sky !  
No outland peaks I know ; but were I born  
Among the lakes, or in the fields of Kai  
No other were the song's essential heart  
Upon the mountains that I then should sing ;  
For once I saw a summit not so bright  
As these are fabled, mounting to the sky  
In scar and ice-cliff loftily supreme,  
But such a mountain as New England knows ;  
And never since in moments when the press

## FIRST POEMS & FRAGMENTS

Of life has lifted has the mountain's touch —  
Joy, merely joy and beauty, that is all,  
And passionate love and depth and mystery —  
Left me ! and thus I sing a native song,  
Content to be a brother to Japan,  
Cousin to Switzerland, believing true  
That ere he wanders by Castalian springs  
The poet first must drink the wells of home.

## II

### NEAR THE WHITE LEDGE, SANDWICH, N. H.

I FOLLOWED up a little burn,  
Led onward by the smell of fern ;  
And standing at the opening day  
Where yellow blossoms line the way  
I catch, blown faintly on the air,  
The whispered perfume of the rare,  
Pale *morning-primrose*, wet and fair !  
The bobolink stands on the grass  
Now ere the deep July shall pass  
And greets me from the bennets tall ;  
I hear a distant thrush's call  
Rise full and deep, then silent fall.

## LONGER POEMS

Spirit of Wordsworth, with me still  
Upon the plain, upon the hill,  
I find my purpose wholly bent  
To be to-day thine instrument ;  
Led upward to the thought of thee  
By all the spreading world I see.  
The broad lake country at my feet  
Bids Asquam with Wynander greet,  
Rydal with Ossipee ; and shows  
The Bearcamp water where it flows  
Another Rotha, stream and break,  
From covert pond to glittering lake ;  
While Grasmere lies serene and still  
By yonder tarn beneath Red Hill.  
Thy mountains, Wordsworth, too, are by  
And paint their shadows on the sky.  
Chocorua stands, but not alone,  
For out across the scene is thrown  
The memory of Helvellyn ; hid  
Within thy folds, Tripyramid,  
Are thoughts of Kirkstone, Fairfield, all  
That heard Joanna's laughing call !  
Whiteface is vanished in the shade  
By Scawfell and Blencathra made ;  
While Sandwich Mountain at the west,  
In Glaramara's shadow dressed,  
Leads the high path toward Campton ways

## FIRST POEMS & FRAGMENTS

Across a steeper Dunmail Raise !  
Lake, hill, and mountain, all are bright  
With the first gift of morning light ;  
The sun is on them and the dew,  
Shining far down and glittering through  
The wide, white fields of mountain air  
High o'er the valleys everywhere.  
And Wordsworth, in the auxiliar flame  
That trembles on them from thy name  
They bear in all their company  
Aloft, the living thought of thee.

The Quaker poet sang his song  
And loved the world these scenes among ;  
A sober man, a song, I think  
Not like the wanton bobolink !  
It was an utterance sweet like those  
Light raptures of the song-sparrows ;  
It ne'er attained the impetuous rush  
And music of the full-voiced thrush ;  
Whose song, O Wordsworth, like to thine  
In joy long-thought and measured fine,  
Is priestly in the praise of Pan Divine.

## LONGER POEMS

### III

#### “I LEFT THE CITY”

I LEFT the city to the north and walked  
Against a southwest wind ; the hurtling rain  
Showered the empty streets in noisy gusts,  
Swept little footsteps down across the walls,  
And on the wind came tossing through the trees.  
The gusty city was not long to leave,  
And underneath the open heaven I found  
Breath and a beating wind, a hurrying sky  
Of gray cloud under white, a world of rain,  
And one long roadway southward under it,  
A causey on the marsh, where on the left  
A broad reach of the tide lay full, with salt  
Red grasses bounded. Swinging to the west  
The long, dark wind came streaming, while the rain  
Sloped with the wind and swept into my face ;  
And I rejoiced, exulted in my heart,  
Taking a grim delight as I suppressed  
Each motion that betrayed me to the rain,  
And drew my mantle closer. Rank on rank  
The rain came on ; the landscape, wetted o'er,  
Lay passive, bay and bogland, to the sky ;  
The wind beat hard, and I through a long hour  
Had stood rejoicing in the unwonted storm,

## FIRST POEMS & FRAGMENTS

When two small figures hurrying through the rain  
Came down the pathway from the town ; they  
    laughed,

Two rascal boys set free from school and mother,  
And laid small schemes for catching smaller fish,  
Clambered across the roadway fence and followed  
Through the salt grasses to the reedy shore ;  
I saw them standing, careful of their lines  
And peering o'er the bankside, plotting deep  
With one desire in earnest in their minds  
And filling them ; while I, the idler there,  
Leaned on the rail to watch them and the bay,  
Gave up the hope I harbored of the west  
And sunset, for the hour was drawing near,  
Content to take my pleasure in the rain.

The sky had darkened in the hour and drew  
A cloak of gray cloud closer to the earth ;  
Sudden as half aware I watched the scene  
A sense of saffron in the western sky  
Grew over me ; the heavens were lifted high  
And broke before my eyes ; along the west  
Great masses of the storm swept to the north,  
Went swarming eastward in the southern sky ;  
The evening earth grew black beneath the light  
That broke through western clouds, that caught  
    the rain

In brightness as it lay in shining pools,

## LONGER POEMS

And sprang from wet walls and from dripping roofs.  
There midst the white light and the golden edges  
Of happy clouds just opening to the earth,  
Bluer than painted blue was ever painted,  
I saw the sky and prayed — prayed ? prayed to  
whom ?

God, God ! I cried, but what I meant I knew not.  
This was the perfect beauty, this was joy  
Supreme, redundant ; ah ! no longer men  
Seek heaven in Beatrice ; this was heaven displayed  
To the broad, fertile earth and yet I prayed not.  
'T was like a gray thought broken by the wind  
Of promise and the sun's fulfilment ; scattered  
To north and south, with routed columns flying,  
Majestic rain in grand procession moved  
Across the saffron fading western sky,  
Cloud upon massive cloud-shape trailing low  
Over the sunset earth ; while in my eyes  
I caught the cool, white, crystal light of heaven  
That glistens after rain, and that one grace  
Supreme that God has granted pagan man,  
The bright blue sky.

# FIRST POEMS & FRAGMENTS

## IV

### THE SONG-SPARROW

A T rest upon some quiet limb  
And singing to his pretty "marrow,"  
Sweet-breasted friend of child and man,  
I love the bright eyes and the tan,  
Gray-mottled coat that suits the trim  
And winsome singing-sparrow.

He seeks no dear and lofty ground ;  
His home is every ridge and furrow ;  
In the low alder bushes he 's  
At home, and in the wayside trees ;  
Wherever man lives I have found  
The nest of the song-sparrow,

Except among the chimney-tops  
A-smoking where the streets are narrow ;  
Where man has banished living green  
And scarce a blade of grass is seen  
He rarely comes, he never stops,  
The little rustic sparrow.

Where twigs are small and branches low  
And scarce the name of woods can borrow,

## LONGER POEMS

He flits and sings the whole day long  
And "Rivers run," is still his song,  
"And flowers blossom, breezes blow,  
And all for the song-sparrow!"

I meet him in the tufted field  
Among the clover-tops and yarrow;  
I hear him by the quiet brook,  
And always with the open look  
Of one who would not be concealed;  
And then I meet the sparrow

When golden lights at evening run  
Among the trees the copses thorough;  
And there I catch his joyous song,  
Stealing the moments that belong  
To songsters of the setting sun  
And not to the song-sparrow.

When touches of the coming night  
Set free the bands of hidden sorrow  
The night-bird sounds his ringing note,  
And from his melancholy throat  
The hermit pours a sad delight,  
And no one hears the sparrow.

His song is tuned for his to-day,  
With hope and promise for the morrow;

## FIRST POEMS & FRAGMENTS

More lofty notes are upward sent,  
But none more simple and content,  
None cheerfuller in work and play  
Than that of the song-sparrow.

### V

#### IN CHERRY LANE

A LITTLE maiden, in her hand  
A pitcher, on her head a band  
Of yellow cloth ; her neck was bare,  
The kerchief fluttered in the air ;  
The loose-stuff gown all straitly hung  
And as she went about her clung ;  
Her bosom showed beneath the dress  
Young and unconscious, and a tress  
Now here, now there, crept out beneath  
The band, as from the opening sheath  
The tasselled spring ; a slender maid,  
She walked in childhood unafraid.

That such a slip of womanhood  
Should blossom in a lane so rude,  
That one in that low, sodden place  
Should smile with such a winning grace

## LONGER POEMS

A marvel is unto the last !  
I seemed to see, even as she passed  
The summer following on the spring ;  
Hot, fetid days that ever bring  
The noisome vapors up about  
The meadow blossom in a rout ;  
Till in the passing of the days  
The stem was bent, the shining face  
Stooped down and met the marshy soil  
And soon was gone. But in my heart  
Even at the fancy I recoil ;  
I will not give her such a part.  
Her eye was bright, her step was free,  
And as I looked I seemed to see  
The quick blood flow, the softer skin  
Below the throat, beneath the chin,  
The quick, young beating of the heart,  
And on her face the blushes start !  
Even as she came so let her go,  
Whither or whence I cannot know.  
I only know if in that lane  
I ever chance to pass again,  
The memory of that maiden fair  
Will lend a fragrance to the air  
And make the place, not over sweet,  
Not wholly evil to my feet.

## FIRST POEMS & FRAGMENTS

### VI

#### WOODSTOCK

**T**HIS, Woodstock, is my gift ; and if I give  
So much as this of all thou gavest me,  
Call me not selfish if I have forgot  
Thy daily life.

#### THE STREAMS

**O**FT have my footsteps in the past been turned,  
Woodstock, to seek in solitude the life  
That flows within thy brotherhood of streams ;  
In Moosilauke the slender, in the blue  
Pemigewasset, and the silver East.  
Now once again — and in what other scenes ! —  
Thy voices come to me, thy life, across  
The silver indistinctness of a year ;  
And first, O Moosilauke, I turn to thee,  
Born of the mighty mountain and its caves  
Dark, and its forests and its long ravines.  
A multitude of slender waters run  
From off the sloping hills, from beds of moss  
Beneath a hundred oaks, from little stones  
Tumbled along before thy April strength,

## LONGER POEMS

Now lying quiet, making thee a bed ;  
From sandy sources in the tufted fields  
Where cattle browse, and from a thousand springs  
Where I was never led thy waters come,  
Thy blue and silver slender stream. The sky  
Bends over thee more closely, and there falls  
A richer gift of azure through the trees  
Upon thy waters, making thee a brook  
Of blue and silver, Moosilauke ; and thou,  
Fulfilled of beauty in thyself and round  
Encompassed all about with loveliness,  
Art richer than thy brothers in the gift  
Of quietness and tender solitude ;  
Friend of the green upon thy banks, thou 'rt loved  
More dearly by the white and purple flowers,  
More dearly loved if loving be the act  
Of neighborhood and presence ; and as I  
Do love the neighborhood of green and blue,  
The forest and the sky ; the silver love  
That glistens in the stream, and that low light  
That passes from the faces of the flowers ;  
So by this promise and confession I  
Do love thee, Moosilauke.

And thee I love,  
Pure in thy beauty, perfect in thy strength,  
Pemigewasset, lying in thy source  
Beneath the brow of the great Profile ! Far

## FIRST POEMS & FRAGMENTS

Above thee is the stern, sad Mountain King,  
Him with the mighty message that no man  
Can wholly hear : the sternness and the sadness  
Of nature conscious of herself, or man  
Conscious of nature, ignorant of God.  
This is the burden of that noble brow ;  
And thou to me didst give along thy way  
Suggestions of this message till below,  
Surrounded by the world, thou dost forget  
Thy birth and I with thee forgot. One day  
I wandered from thy course beside a run  
Of darker waters ; turning from the track  
Of wheels and from the multitude of men  
Along thy fertile way, to seek thy stream,  
Thou dark-veined Bogan, tributary brook.  
Thy waters run and bear a deeper song  
Soft on the moss, and in my heart I love  
The memory of that hour wherein I stayed  
My life a little while with thee ; my heart  
Was opened to thee in a deep unrest,  
And to the motion of thy currents all  
My thoughts ran freely ; 't was a joy to hear,  
'T was rest and satisfaction to behold  
Thy voice and colors and thy forms ; I took  
A comfort in thy presence, tuned to hear  
A voice in thee repeated from my own  
And yet not wholly mine ; but more, to live

## LONGER POEMS

And run harmonious with my hand in thine,  
And in the gentle beating of thy life  
Find my own poise and balance ; wrapt about  
As in a mist of music and led on  
To live and feel as prodigal as thou,  
Careless of all degrees.

And now with strength and joy I turn to thee  
Thundering in thy caverns, noble East,  
Born of the midmost of the mountains, child  
More truly than the Saco of the heart  
And spirit of the hills. The powers prevail  
Through all the mountains that shall give thee life ;  
Thy birth is now upon a thousand peaks  
And has been and shall be ; thou art a giant,  
Impatient of the earth that holds thee, wild !  
And thus thy voice is stranger to me, thus  
It sounds a note I cannot always hear,  
Not in all moods ; but sometimes, low at first,  
Above the unsensed tumult of the world  
I hear the rushing of thy waters, catch  
The silver flash of sunlight from thy rocks,  
Then in my heart feel thy great spirit moving.  
Thou art the friend, not of the earth — the rocks  
Surround thee and control thy dreadful course —  
But of the mountain winds ; the winds pass o'er thee  
And catch thy motion and thy eager voice ;

## FIRST POEMS & FRAGMENTS

Thus tempered they pass onward and below  
They whisper to the listening ear of man.  
Or in thy solitudes perchance he hears  
A choral voice, thy music and the wind,  
Joined always, breathing to the same intent,  
A brother voice, an echo of his own.  
There if he listen, down below the sound  
He hears the voice articulate of life  
Made manifest his own ; he hears *his* voice  
Dim-speaking to him through the gulf of change ;  
Another form, a myriad others, but  
Ever his own beseeching to be heard  
In sympathy. Wise in my purpose I,  
Nor I alone give, noble East, to thee  
My hand ; for thou art brother to the wind,  
And savage as thou art, child of the peaks,  
Clad white in rocks and thine own silver form,  
Thou dost not find thy rest upon the earth  
But goest dissatisfied unto the sea  
Where thou again art wild.

To J. T. S.

## LONGER POEMS

### THE HEDGEROW

THE sun is up, Great God, the sun is up,  
High o'er the eastern hill among white clouds  
Insufferable ! I thank Thee for the call.  
Deep in the Woodstock meadows on a morn  
Pleasant it is to wander ere the sun  
Has burned the dewdrops off the bending grass ;  
When each small area seems a world complete,  
When every forest stem beneath the sun  
Shoots out a light, and every meadow span  
Is dowered with moving radiance ; and the hills !  
I had not known their power till I had seen,  
Limned by the early morn, their mystic heads  
White in the eastern circuit. From the town  
The path led out across the dew-wet lands,  
Crossed the cold river in the river-mist,  
And turned aside before the columned elms,  
Heavy with morning light ; three things remain  
In joy, of all the pleasant things I saw  
Along this early path : the glowing elms,  
Far off, the line of hills, and suddenly  
(That rose abrupt and claimed its character)  
A straight and tangled row of heavy green,  
A hedge, till then unguessed, where loftier trees  
Stood up amid a world of clustering things,  
Brambles and slender vines and, stiffly held,

## FIRST POEMS & FRAGMENTS

The heads of little, sturdy, hopeful trees.  
Along one maple branch some colder wisp  
Of passing wind had struck an early blow  
And pressed the green life back ; the kindlier airs  
Had after gathered round and now caressed  
The broken hope into a golden death.  
This was a passing fancy, but the elms  
Are living elms and must forever live,  
Rich in the willing burden of that morn ;  
I never see beneath the golden mist  
Of peaceful afternoon, or in the time  
Of open daylight such an upland slope  
Without the gentle coming of this one,  
This morning picture and the further thought  
Of all the hidden chambers whence are drawn  
The veils, lights, shadows, colors of the world  
That spread across the poorest piece of ground  
To form and to transform ; then at the last  
I saw the tangled hedgerow by the wall,  
My mind woke to a fancy and at once  
I found it wandering over English fields  
And lodging with the primrose and the lark ;  
For here there was a hedge ! The pioneer  
Had built his roadside wall of labored stone,  
And through his fields had led this simple line  
Rough-set of rounded rock, to part his herd  
Of cattle and his flock (perhaps) of sheep,

## LONGER POEMS

What time they browsed in Woodstock. Early  
grass  
Had pushed a carpet in among the stones  
And here the scythe had stopped; chance-drifted  
dust,  
Holding the promise and the hope of life,  
Seeds, the small looms of nature's garment, here  
Found an untroubled resting-place and ran  
Through all their changes. Years passed by and  
here  
The squirrel found a harbor and a home;  
For overhead the angled beechnut hung,  
And hazels stood at hand. Here in the spring  
The gold of summer's sunrise — dandelions —  
And daisies, starry oxeyes, clustered near;  
The earlier violets were not absent nor  
In later days the modest, showy bell,  
Blue, slender-hanging. So the summers passed,  
Rising and falling; as his homestead grew  
The farmer mowed more widely, nor his flocks  
Demanded less his care in fold and field  
To bound; and so as ever each day more  
He saw the need for labor, this one wall,  
Now old and overgrown, he eyed with pleasure;  
The stones might fall away, the flooding rains  
That drove the stream up on the meadow-lands  
Might roll and still displace them, and the vines,

## FIRST POEMS & FRAGMENTS

The wild grape and the bramble, force their way  
Disintegrating, still no care was his ;  
For over all the green was gathered close  
And densely massed, so that no glimpse beyond  
Greeted the searching eye ; and here I found  
The hedgerow standing as the sun had shaped it,  
Richly confused and prodigal and wild,  
And yet a straight, well-guided hedge and serving  
Its master better than he served himself,  
Adding to service beauty and a soul.

### SOLITUDE

**I**KNOW a little patch of mountain ground  
Low-settled by itself ; and Moosilauke  
Stands boldly in the west but never sees  
Its little group of buildings and the elm  
Close by the door. And farther in the north,  
Bearing his sun-scarred summit proudly forth,  
Stands noble Lafayette ; he looks abroad  
Across the sunny hamlet where the meadows  
Shine with a softer green, yet scarcely knows  
This low gray dwelling and beside the door  
Its ancient elm-tree ; yet do Lafayette  
And Moosilauke the mountain and the deep,  
Aspiring hills feel through their silent hearts

## LONGER POEMS

The birth and progress, Woodstock, of thy streams,  
Born of the mossy mountains and the rocks  
And running through the hills ; and they in turn  
Do visit and confirm the house in joy.  
Gray with the touch of nature, friend familiar  
Of forests and their mosses, with its roofs  
Long-sloping to the west, I see it stand,  
With gables not uncopied from the hills,  
The mountain house, the home of quietness.  
The village knew it not ; beyond the hill  
It was itself a hamlet ; here there stood  
Its tributary fields and pastures, here  
A crystal source of water and a world  
Of timber, and its flocks were on the hills.  
There lay the little graveyard in the pines,  
And these with larches and small maples made  
A decent graveyard shadow ; and I see  
One queer, untutored apple that has placed  
His foot beyond the pale, dropping his fruit  
On the most ancient grave ; all round about  
Are golden meadows quiet in the sun,  
With ombrel elm-trees dotting out the green.

This is the gate to Solitude ; one day  
I crossed the yard to where an old man sat  
And questioned him, although I knew him not,  
Brought here among the sources of the hills

## FIRST POEMS & FRAGMENTS

Close to the thought of small simplicity.  
I asked him, "Where is Solitude?" He rose,  
And pointing with his cane across the ridge  
Described a course that drew my heart in joy;  
"Beyond the sheepfold follow the small lane  
Across the first low ridge; the cattle there  
Are mine and mine the pasture to the wood;  
The lane will enter through the trees and lead  
A mile or more over and up the slope,  
There where you see the pines; let down the bars  
At the upper end and that is Solitude."  
I never started out on any course  
With half the joy I felt for Solitude!  
Rocks in the pasture lay, oases bare  
In deserts of green grass! I moved among  
The beasts and stood beside them where they drank  
The stony pasture stream, where little grass  
Crept thickly down the bank beside the shallows.  
I wet my lips; 't is like a sacrament  
To touch wild water where the cattle drink;  
And more, I guessed it came from Solitude.  
Then at the entrance of the trees I stood,  
Ground the hard earth beneath my foot, and sent  
A proud glance northward; he who thus can stand  
On Moosilauke and look on Lafayette  
Is master of the western hills; below,  
Beyond the trees and pasture lay the valley

## LONGER POEMS

Voiceless and crowded by the mountains round  
In multitude so great I turned and fled  
Up the long, turning footway of the lane.  
Ah, silence in the forest ! I have learned  
More from the hush of forests than from speech  
Of many teachers, more of joy at least,  
And that quick sympathy where joy has birth ;  
A thousand times called outward from myself  
By life at every point, ten thousand things  
Speaking at once in tones so sharp and sweet  
Their voice was pain, but pain as life is pain  
Beneath the over-chorus of the sky ;  
In silence finding joy to know myself  
Deep in the heart of nature and the world.  
As one advances up the slow ascent  
Along the pathway in the woods the trees  
Change aspect, nor alone in this but change  
In stature and in power till Solitude  
Seems cut out of the ancient forest. Here  
Was Solitude ! where man had lived of old,  
Loved, serving God, and built himself a home.  
Man smooths an acre on the rolling earth,  
Turns up the mould and reaps the gifts of God ;  
Plucks down the apple from the tree, the tree  
From empire in the forest, builds a home ;  
Turns for a bout among his brothers, wins  
A sister to his wife and gets an heir ;

## FIRST POEMS & FRAGMENTS

And then as here in Solitude departs  
And leaves small mark behind. The place is rare  
In this high epic of the human life.  
Where wildness has been wilderness shall be,  
But give God time ; and life is but a span,  
Nine inches, while before it and behind  
Stretches the garden of the cosmic gods ;  
For after London, England shall be wild  
And none can thaw the iceberg at the pole.  
In Solitude one sees the winding trace  
Of what has been a road, a block of stone  
Footworn, that lies along the dim pathway  
Before one old foundation ; and the rest  
Is freaks of grass among the rising growth  
Of birch and maple that another year  
Shall see almost a forest.

## VII

### PUTATIS LUCUM LIGNA

YE seem intent to stand alone  
Monarchs, ye men, of stock and stone ;  
The forest dead and everywhere  
Untenanted the fields of air.  
To view a wood unwilling, ye

## LONGER POEMS

Who for the timber hate the tree !  
Will ye cast nature from her throne  
And waste the earth you call your own ?  
Descending from the Lincoln hills  
I came where join the Woodstock rills ;  
Across the east a smoky veil  
Lets not, or day or night, to trail  
Words dire in meaning, seen before  
By Dante on the infernal door !  
For pant of engines on the air  
Shatters the mountain silence where  
Five-throated, bound with iron bands,  
The havoc of the forest stands !

Where man has conquered nature dies  
From out her own familiar skies,  
    And nature loves her child ;  
'T is nature loves the running brooks,  
Not man but nature guards the nooks  
    From which they are beguiled.  
Infinite labor gives them birth,  
The rocks, the deeps below the earth,  
And dusky shadows bring them forth  
    As weak as they are wild.  
The earth will, all in little room  
Become a garden, then a tomb ;  
    Then keep it while ye may

## FIRST POEMS & FRAGMENTS

A little wild, where we may see  
The unthreatened glory of a tree,  
    And feel the fountain's spray.  
Reserve one spot where we may find  
An untamed accent in the wind ;  
And beds of moss unbroken, where  
To mark the footprint of the bear ;  
One stream of water mountain-pure  
Wherein the wild trout may endure  
And the wild deer may drink and bathe secure !

SONNETS

I - XVI





# I

THE flood of life that turned away  
In search of rarer things, the rose,  
The fragile flower that bursting blows,  
And as it blows turns to decay,  
Once more seeks rest along the way  
Of earlier days and finds repose  
In love of each green thing that grows,  
A bunch of grass, an alder spray.  
You common things I hold you dear  
And beg the comfort you can give ;  
The faith that bears you through the year,  
The courage both to die and live ;  
Believing that I too shall hear  
The mountains fall, and shall not grieve.

## FIRST POEMS & FRAGMENTS

### II

TEN thousand fancies flitting through the mind,  
An impulse here, a half-created thought  
Are, in the stress of fancied duty, taught  
To bow and pass and leave no trace behind.  
Or carelessness, destructive as the wind,  
More prodigal than nature, valuing not  
The store of life that pain and joy have wrought  
Laughs and forgets, blind leader of the blind !  
We are but open caskets whence are fled  
The choicest gifts God-given ; while we retain  
Indifference with a blustering hardihead,  
And querulousness before a righteous pain ;  
Pale pietism, when virtue's self is dead,  
With smug conceit impregnable and vain.

## SONNETS

### III

“**M**ERCY! Justice! Ah, no! Heaven’s gate!  
Heaven’s gate!”

Panic above the crash of trampling horse  
And rush of wings upright against the course,  
A cry of gods confounded under fate!  
In tumult deep and inarticulate  
The angelic press burst outward, of the Source  
Of bulk Omnipotence compelled by force—  
Save Lucifer, omnipotent in hate.  
Bright as the dying day, with one black cloud  
Up-marshalled from the south and crossing o’er  
The glory and blotting out the evening star,  
So for a space he stood; then silent bowed,  
And from the battlements outspringing far  
Deep into darkness all his anguish bore.

## FIRST POEMS & FRAGMENTS

### IV

I LOVE the hills but she the open shore,  
The shore because it lies along the sea.  
I would be lofty, solitary, free,  
Selfish at times ; at times, hearing the roar  
Of the ocean where beneath the bending oar  
It does the planet service, I would be  
As rich in blessing, yea, as rich as she  
Is rich in blessing ; I could not be more.  
I walk apart, my heart is in the sky,  
Yet ever yearning downward to the land ;  
She walks where all the world is crowding by  
And holds a little child in either hand ;  
I bless her service with a troubled cry  
Of one who would but cannot understand.

## SONNETS

### V

I CANNOT face the utterance of a prayer  
In innocence ; I know not by what gate  
Egress it finds beyond the fields of air ;  
In what vain corridor my words may wait.  
A mystic once, I did communicate  
With my own self and thought with God to share  
My hope and aspiration ; but of late  
My words, like Noah's dove, returning bare,  
I feel the confines of my spirit's heaven.  
Against the limits of myself in vain  
They strike and bruise their wings and downward  
fall.  
Then to myself, Peace ! do I cry, and call  
That sufferance peace which yet is perfect pain :  
In courage, Peace ! when there is no peace given.

## FIRST POEMS & FRAGMENTS

### VI

**T**O catch at that which never can be caught,  
To yearn for what thou never shalt attain  
(Nature's own motions moving in the brain)  
This is thy life and thou by her art taught.  
This is her gift ; to thee if welcome not  
With all its store of passion and of pain,  
Thou hast the power to give it back again  
And break the bow before thou triest the shot.  
Nay rather let me live to fight the fight  
And die the death, when driven against the wall,  
That many a man has fairly fought and died.  
Then shall I keep the spark she gave me bright  
(Gigantic mirth, that gave it to deride !)  
And cast it at the heavens even as I fall.

## SONNETS

### VII

A MONTH ago the cloud alone was fair.  
None watched the leafless tree-tops, thin and  
dry,  
Hold up their slender fans against the sky  
Save here a poet and a dreamer there.  
But now the sun through the soft, golden air  
Requires an incense from the flowers that lie  
Within a thousand vales ; and low and high  
The broad earth doth a pale green mantle wear.  
Now voices are where all was still before ;  
By each green leaf there trembles a brown wing ;  
A thousand small lives wake beside my door  
And each one turns to labor and to sing.  
At last man feels the tumult of the spring  
And looks upon the universe once more.

## FIRST POEMS & FRAGMENTS

### VIII

A THOUSAND flowerets of a thousand hues  
Born of the sunset and the early dawn,  
Burn in the darker forest and suffuse  
An unimagined brightness o'er the lawn.  
These are the days I give my heart in pawn  
To thee, O nature, and the world refuse ;  
These are the days I feel my footsteps drawn  
To seek the wayward motions of the muse !  
I have not long enough on earth to stay  
To lose the joy of one bright summer day ;  
One quiet day of peace, ah many a one !  
Full of the song of birds and tremulous  
With sunshine ; let the world seek after us :  
The muse and I are wandering with the sun.

## SONNETS

### IX

I STOOD long time and listened to the wind  
That tossed the fallen foliage o'er and o'er ;  
Long time I stood ; then turned within to bind  
An evergreen upon the open door.  
When winter comes to sweep across the floor  
And freeze the panes perforce the huswife mind  
Shuts-to the autumnal door and there reclined  
Battens on books till summer comes once more.  
I cannot stop her ; turning to the shelves  
Her idleness she feeds on other men ;  
Takes what she finds, complaining not and delves  
In mines deep-sunken with the golden pen ;  
Then weary grows and longs to see again  
The spirits of the sky, the woodland elves.

## FIRST POEMS & FRAGMENTS

### X

#### MOOSILAUKE IN DECEMBER

THE wet, brown leaves of winter on the ground  
Unkempt they looked or evil, one by one  
Called back to vision by a careless sun ;  
He should by this have reached his southern bound  
Leaving December earth all straitly gowned  
In decent white ; but here we trod upon  
Her bosom black, uncovered and undone,  
And shrank from many a wet and naked wound.  
The Parthian sun his arrows to the head  
Drew, and within the field a little rill  
Beneath an edge of morning ice awoke ;  
A line down through the mat-brown grass it led  
White, threaded with the blue the heavens spill,  
And tinkled coldly past a frozen oak.

## SONNETS

Light veils of snow the west wind bore along,  
White shadows, drifted through the upper air  
Above the valley ; they were very fair  
And passed in music like a summer song.  
I stood upon a mountain ; here the strong  
Wild-Ammonoosuc rolled in forests bare,  
A tumult in his hollow pathway ; there  
Whispered through Wildwood with an icy tongue.  
The sunlight shone on Kinsman through the cloud  
And turned the little falling snow to gold  
Which never reached the earth, but it went back  
Into the chambers of the air ; the loud,  
White shepherd west wind drove into the fold  
And forests waving showed his vanished track.

## FIRST POEMS & FRAGMENTS

Standing above the Tunnel gorge, the brook  
Unseen, unheard below I knew laid out  
And trimmed its tenements for April's trout,  
Rested and ran from hidden nook to nook.  
The wintry forests in the wind had shook  
December from their branches ; round about,  
The sun had aided in the season's rout  
To Moosilauke ; and when to him I look,  
White snow and winter build in me a sense,  
Structured on beauty awful and serene,  
Of majesty, a pressing sense of fear.  
I never saw a vision more intense  
In awfulness than that tremendous scene —  
Black Moosilauke, uprising dark and near !

## SONNETS

So very near ! Far down, the Tunnel run  
Crept out beneath the mountain's heavy base ;  
Buttress and bastion mounting I could trace  
In upright courses to the supreme One,  
High, distant dome where-over bits of sun  
Ran with the rolling clouds a windy race.  
But all beneath was blackness, and my face  
A breath as of the mountain fell upon.  
A whisper from the mountain came across,  
So dark, so strong ! a breath in blackness drawn,  
Long drawn and deep, so near we were and high !  
And then it seemed a simple child might toss  
Against the opposèd wall a pebble-stone,  
Deep in the Tunnel gorge to roll and lie.

## FIRST POEMS & FRAGMENTS

### XI

THE poet stoops and plucks a little flower  
To tell his greatness in a simple song ;  
He does not need through seasons to prolong  
A mighty work to manifest his power ;  
Which still is simple, still the common dower  
If unexpressed, of many in the throng  
Unconscious who, with poetry along,  
In life's sojourn spend many a happy hour.  
So Burns delights us with a lowly lay,  
The warm expression of a simple joy ;  
So Wordsworth, moving through each quiet day,  
Forgets not the quick impulse of the boy ;  
And midst thy passion, Shelley, to destroy,  
Thou'st found the truth along the lyric way.

## SONNETS

### XII

I HATE the vast array of “ modern ” things,  
Gilt and pale purple, yellow, pink, and white ;  
Dull imitations and a thousand light  
And weightless books of verse and copyings.  
There are so many ! Every season brings  
A thousand fashions new and with delight  
Proclaims them beautiful ; till I take flight  
And turn me to the masters and the kings.  
And yet they will not let the masters be ;  
I find my Walton in a showy dress ;  
Find all the bright, old-age simplicity  
Bedecked and botched ; the years of good Queen  
    Bess  
Are made the dull philistine’s property ;  
And Burns is “ popularly ” sent to press.

## FIRST POEMS & FRAGMENTS

### XIII

HIGH on a sunward-mounting precipice  
Edged with a cloud that all before me ran,  
I backward gazed and pictured, span by span,  
How I had mounted upward from the abyss ;  
By what a confused pathway come to this,  
The end of earth ; and saw the future's plan  
Grow, "minimize the universe to man,"  
And build a daring, nobler edifice.  
Ah, struggle to assume this new control  
And seek thy higher reaches, O my soul !  
Thou 'rt sure of this, thy feet are on the earth ;  
Forget it, it remains ; but let thine eyes  
Lead on thy heart, and find beyond the skies  
At least the promise of an upward birth.

## SONNETS

### XIV

HONEY of woodland wild and of the hill,  
The juices of the maple and the cane  
And all the fulness of the fallen grain ;  
The pauses in the running of the rill,  
Silence of distant meadows, voices far  
Of unseen swallows in the upper air ;  
The beauty of the bending bough ; the rare,  
Soft rose, the sunbeam and the melting star —  
What are they all but shadows in the night  
To thee, where beauty burns a perfect light !  
I see thee standing gracefuller than grass,  
Nakea, with one foot in the lingering stream,  
The sun upon thee, perfect ! or alas,  
Is it not thee, my dryad, but a dream !

## FIRST POEMS & FRAGMENTS

### XV

THE warm, moist kiss of April on the grass ;  
The stooping sun, the wet and fragrant plain ;  
The voice of life, low-whispered as I pass ;  
The vision of the summer through the rain ;  
A thousand thoughts borne outward from the mind  
Laughing at nature, caught and held again  
Close to the stirring heart, till like the grain  
In autumn they are scattered by the wind !  
And some may range along the open sky,  
And some may fall and live and some may die.  
I care not now whether the wanton air  
Rid me of flying chaff or sift the seed  
Of future promise ; or if this, indeed,  
My present fancy lead me anywhere !

## SONNETS

### XVI

I LAID upon a rock beside the sea  
A spray of eglantine where all about  
The water rushed in torrents in and out  
Among the wet, black rocks tempestuously.  
To eastward high, a little promont'ry  
Up-bore the billows on his iron breast;  
And thence they rolled beyond him to the west  
Surging about my eglantine and me.  
And of the mightiest waves their spray that cast  
White and imperious far into the air,  
Not one but passed the sweet-briar safely by.  
Till, midst the churning foam and surges there  
That reached but could not clutch it, rising high  
The tide itself did take it at the last.



FRAGMENTS

I - V





# I

**I**N the low-lying April afternoon  
The earth was hushed within a mellow mist  
Across the new brown meadows ; the white sun  
Was gathered in a knot of clouds and gave  
No thought of an infinity beyond.  
Each blade of grass was conscious of its shadow ;  
The sounds of birds and waters and the air  
Were stilled within the silence where I sat  
Beside, and as I sat I felt the least  
Of nature's children that around me played,  
And all was like a dream. I gathered up  
A handful of the grass and then forgot it ;  
I felt a gentle rising of the wind  
And heard a sparrow whisper close at hand,  
With other little life beside me ; but  
The distance faded and the nearness grew  
Confusèd to a fancy in the gray,  
The desolate gray shadow of the earth,  
Unreal and dimly dying from my thought  
Till all was nothing save the sun and me.

## FIRST POEMS & FRAGMENTS

### II

WESTWARD I walked; the sun was low;  
the plain,  
Seeming to rise before me, with the earth  
Revolving, rolling backward to the east,  
Shut out the dropping sun. I hastened on,  
But still the day grew darker as the west  
Drew in its last, white, fading fan of light,  
And all the world was cold; and when the land  
Ceased to reflect the sky, and heavy lay,  
And dully, by itself, I came where spread  
A darkling mirror, whitened half, and blue,  
Still cherishing a faint thought of the sky.  
The hour was calm, forgetful of the day,  
Where toward the noon the pattering rain did  
beat

The fragrant earth; a soft green mist arose  
And lay across the opening fields; and then,  
Sweeping the huddled air around the world  
The silver storm scowled black; o'er all the sky  
It tore itself in fury and ran low  
Across the shuddering earth; it seized the trees,  
It seized the mountains in its gloomy hands  
And shook them; while the terror stricken streams  
Leaped madly on to aid the warring sea.  
Then in the thronging blackness of the storm

## FRAGMENTS

I had rejoiced, as now I smiled to see  
The fair, white, gentle surface of the lake  
And feel the air fall softly ; at my feet  
The waters rose like coming thoughts that fall  
Forgotten, and my mind rose till it ran  
As smoothly as the yet unbroken wave.

### III

THE wild-eyed, savage gull, with bow'd wing,  
tips  
The white, flat surface of the misty sea ;  
Or, stooping in the wind-trod, hollow wave,  
Reels upward straight, hangs quivering, his whole  
self  
Intent, and breaks the surface like a bolt !  
This spirit of the mystery of the sea  
Sweeps by in silence on the noisy scud,  
Or bursts across the borders of the storm,  
A flash of horrid white ; with beating wing  
Struggles in futile, royal wrath against  
The armed battalions of a mighty wind,  
And beaten, leaps aloft upon the storm  
To ride in fury down the conquering gale.  
Away, thou symbol of my own gray thoughts !  
Whenever from the heaven of weary hopes

## FIRST POEMS & FRAGMENTS

The clouds run low in the palely flowing sky ;  
Whenever from the world of the unachieved  
The mists mount up to meet the drooping cloud,  
And I between them fail, 't is thou I see,  
Thou dreadful emblem of my darker life !  
Thou art no child of sunlight, for indeed,  
Whether beneath some purple summer eve  
Thou weariest thy way into the west,  
Or in the winter on the frozen bay  
Standest erect, a white, mad, ravened king,  
Life-banished by the ice, thou art the same,  
Grim, busy with thyself, hard, gloomy, wild.

### IV

**A**T sunset in the college close the light  
Falls like a benediction softly down ;  
Here is a moving stillness in the air,  
Quiet, as though the now deserted east  
Had laid its empty hand upon the lawns  
And hushed the world ; from out the glowing west  
The sunlight settles on each tender leaf,  
And entering in the gentle, empty cells  
Calls through the hollow tubes ; down to the earth  
Trembles the peaceful summons ; and the grass  
Drinks in the sunset light, except where lie

## FRAGMENTS

Dark traceries of black upon the green,  
Left mourning for the sun the while the tree  
Laughs with its selfish seizure of the light !  
This is the life of peace ; but on the sky  
The city in the distance casts a light  
Brilliant and false, electric, publishing  
Confusion and false day, nature betrayed,  
And all the dark disguises of the town ;  
The frantic strivings after more, that choke  
The holy fact of life, which single here  
Sits at the heart and bids the rest be still.

## V

WHEN the low sun descends on Hamlet hill  
And this my maple throws a longer line  
Of lengthening shadow down across the slope,  
Then has a day departed, casting yet  
A lingering light from sidelong slopes and hills  
That run into the west. Much would I love  
One passing day to live beneath my tree,  
And there within its shadow on the earth  
Move with the moving sun a mutual course.  
First in the dawning is the crystal light  
Scarce sprinkled o'er the hill, while all the heaven  
Sheds seeming equal brightness on the world ;

## FIRST POEMS & FRAGMENTS

But after comes the round, revealing sun,  
To mark his influence and define the earth,  
Giving my tree its shadow on the ground.  
And therein would I rest and through the day  
Follow it lengthening downward past the noon ;  
See the light grasses and the browsèd tufts  
Of pasture herbage tremble in the sun,  
Pale upland asters, dusty goldenrod,  
And all the autumn flowering of the fields ;  
Then feel them sink to quietness within  
The slow advancing shadow. I should find  
A joy in the light liftings of the leaves,  
Breeze-shifted shadows trembling, little rays  
Of unexpected light along the ground.  
Then as the day advanced to its fall  
And this my maple's shadow crept along  
Downward, I should forget the lesser life  
Of grass blade and of sunny pebble-stone,  
Feeling the great fact of the day's decline,  
The coming of the hour when all the hill  
Would cast its shadow ; of the later night,  
The shadow of the earth. Thus would I live,  
And one day thus bid welcome and depart.

P O E M S



A.D. MDCCCCXCVIII



## TO CITRIODORA

*I turn and see you passing in the street  
When you are not. I take another way,  
Lest missing you the fragrance of the day  
Exhale, and I know not that it is sweet.  
And marking you I follow, and when we meet  
Love laughs to see how sudden I am gay ;  
Sweetens the air with fragrance like a spray  
Of sweet verbena, and bids my heart to beat.*

*Love laughs ; and girls that take you by the hand,  
Know that a sweet thing has befallen them ;  
And women give their hearts into your heart.  
There is, I think, no man in all the land  
But would be glad to touch your garment's hem.  
And I, I love you with a love apart.*



## I

**S**PINOZA polished glasses clear  
To view the heavenly hemisphere ;  
I verses, that my friend therethrough  
My arc of earth may rightly view.

## II

**I**F one should call my branching verse  
Bundles of fagot sticks, or worse,  
Each bush, I pray, let shed perfume,  
And burn with fire and not consume ;  
And may each branch, like Aaron's rod,  
Bud and betray the vital god.

## III

**B**ROTHER, Time is a thing how slight !  
Day lifts and falls, and it is night.  
Rome stands an hour, and the green leaf  
Buds into being bright and brief.  
For us, God has at least in store  
One shining moment, less or more.  
Seize, then, what mellow sun we may,  
To light us in the darker day.

## POEMS

### IV

“ **B**ELOVE in me ! ” Lord, who art thou  
That bid’st me to believe in thee ?  
I have my life to live, and now  
Thy yoke would but a burden be ;  
I would be free.

“ Come, follow me ! ” Nay, Lord, my way  
Is wide of thine along the sea ;  
Among the hills I love to stray,  
Nor walks there anyone with me ;  
Why I with thee ?

### V

#### MARCH 20

“ **R**ETURN, return ! ” the unheard cry  
Of robins in the upper sky,  
As by and long this barren coast,  
In March comes up the southern host.

Low-anchored in the tangled swale  
I mark them slant along the gale,  
At speed, with every feather set  
For some more distant harbor yet.

## POEMS

Around me is the mellow lisp  
Of bluebirds warbling, and the crisp  
Chick ! of the sparrow, and the cheer  
Of homing robins harbored here.

No forward aspen-leaf or oak  
Has through his leathern jacket broke ;  
The grass puts up a doubtful wing ;  
The hazel censers coldly swing.

But maple-buds, new fashionèd  
On every stem, are tipped with red.  
Green, saffern-flushing osiers glow  
Above the wakened waters' flow.

Year in, year out, the fire of spring  
Burns through its ashen covering,  
Bursts up in flower and scent and song,  
And drives the laggard March along.

Year after year the birds will fly  
Along this same gray, mortal sky.  
Praise God I see them and can say,  
Another year, another day !

## POEMS

### VI

#### THE SPARROW

THE morning lay divinely bright  
Across near field and distant height.  
From his high tower the influent sun  
Controlled the shifting tides of air,  
Which first in flow would lightly run,  
Then fall in ebb of radiance rare.

One sparrow on an elm-tree high  
Conceived the day as fair as I.  
Midway the high bank of the tree  
He sat upon a beakèd branch,  
And poured into the engulfing sea  
His music's slender avalanche.

His pipe was sharp, his numbers few,  
And caught no ear but me and you.  
Yet forth upon his promontory  
He stood in the wide sea of air,  
And bore his witness to the glory  
With all the heart a thrush might dare.

## POEMS

### VII

#### PRESTO

QUICK-fingered Spring her wand choragic,  
A cherry branch, has waved in air;  
And swift by arts of natural magic  
The clustered cherry-blooms are there.

You 've seen the children in their pastime  
Plunge rods into a syrup thick,  
Three times or four, and at the last time  
Hold up in joy a candy-stick.

You 've seen a chemist, quick and curious,  
Observe a liquid saturate,  
And mark, when least the jar seemed furious,  
The crystal-flowers precipitate.

And now, of cherry-blooms creator  
Ere yet the woods and walks are green,  
Rose-fingered prestidigitator,  
Young chemic Spring at work you 've seen

## POEMS

### VIII

#### IN DOVE COTTAGE GARDEN

ON the terrace lies the sunlight, fretted with  
the shade  
Of the wilding apple-orchard Wordsworth made.

Sunlight falls upon the aspen, and the cedar glows  
Like the laurel or the climbing Christmas rose.

Through green-golden vistas downward if your  
glances fall,  
Hardly would you guess the cottage there at all.

Bines of bryony and bramble overhang the green  
Of the crowding scarlet-runner and the bean.

But I mark one quiet casement, ivy-covered still.  
There he sat, I think, and loved this little hill;

Loved the rocky stair that led him upward to the  
seat  
Coleridge fashioned; loved the fragrant, high  
retreat

In the wood above the garden. There he walked,  
and there

In his heart the beauty gathered to a prayer.

## POEMS

In the sunshine by the cottage doorway I can see,  
In among her Christmas roses, Dorothy.

Deeper joy and truer service, fuller draught of life,  
Came I doubt not to the sister, and the wife.

Laurel, it may be, too early on his brow he set,  
And the thorn of life too lightly could forget.

Dorothy, wild heart and woman, chose the better  
way,  
Met the world with love and service every day.

Love for life and life for loving, and the poet's part  
Is to love his life and, living, love his art.

But the shadow from the fellside falls, and all the  
scene  
Melts and runs, green-gold to slumbrous golden-  
green.

Showers of golden light on Grasmere tremble into  
shade,  
While the garden grasses gather blade with blade;

And one patient robin-redbreast, waiting, waiting  
long,  
Seals the twilight in the garden with a song.

## POEMS

### IX

#### A WREATH OF BUDS AND LAVENDER

**D**EATH has a power to fright the soul,  
And unseat courage from control.

But when, by love and sorrow led,  
I passed your door and looked, with dread  
To see the symbols of the dead ;

And found, in place of black despair,  
Which I all-looked for, hanging there  
A wreath of buds and lavender ;

I blessed the heart that would out-brave,  
For love, the terror of the grave.

### X

#### SWEET THORN

**W**HAT is St. Francis' flower ? 'T is not  
The daisy nor the melilot,  
Nor that white little flower that springs  
In Grasmere's quiet garden-plot.

## POEMS

'T is not the lily-flower that blows  
In some high heaven of repose.

'T is not the sorrow of the thorn,  
Nor utter passion of the rose.

It is the wild-heart eglantine,  
(Sweet bush to a far sweeter wine),  
With joy for man, sweet-thorn for Christ,  
Not pagan all, not all divine.

## XI

### SILKWEED

LIGHTER than dandelion down,  
Or feathers from the white moth's wing,  
Out of the gates of bramble-town  
The silkweed goes a-gypsyng.

Too fair to fly in autumn's rout,  
All winter in the sheath it lay ;  
But now, when spring is pushing out,  
The zephyr calls, "Away ! Away ! "

Through mullein, bramble, brake, and fern,  
Up from their cradle-spring they fly,  
Beyond the boundary wall to turn  
And voyage through the friendly sky.

## POEMS

Softly, as if instinct with thought,  
They float and drift, delay and turn ;  
And one avoids and one is caught  
Between an oak-leaf and a fern.

And one holds by an airy line  
The spider drew from tree to tree ;  
And if the web is light and fine,  
'T is not so light and fine as he !

And one goes questing up the wall  
As if to find a door ; and then,  
As if he did not care at all,  
Goes over and adown the glen.

And all in airiest fashion fare  
Adventuring, as if, indeed,  
'T were not so grave a thing to bear  
The burden of a seed !

## POEMS

### XII

#### THE FIRE-FLY

**T**O-DAY as writing in the park  
I sat, came twilight and the dark.  
There as I watched the color run  
In waves above the sunken sun,  
A lightning-bug, (for candle), took  
His post just here upon my book.  
His wing he raised, his golden urn  
Of fire he let a moment burn.

Pray, for his sake, behold this line  
With a not common brightness shine.

### XIII

#### CLEAR AND FAR

**H**OW clear, when 't is most far from clear,  
Far sounds across the dark you hear:  
Approaching wheels, when in the lane  
The mist is turning into rain;  
A baying hound below the hill;  
A train, when all the night is still.  
The silent air, now dense and drowned,  
A carriage makes for every sound.  
How far, when 't is from clear most far,  
Most clear at night far noises are.

## POEMS

### XIV

#### ARCHITECTURE

YOU 'VE seen a sky, besprent with mist  
Across the sleepy amethyst,  
Break when the western wind has sent  
His harriers to the orient.

Then in the azure deeps  
Gathers the mist and sleeps  
In snowy towering heaps.

You 've seen the leafy storm of May  
Sweep the brown April earth like spray,  
And round some gray stem, bare of late,  
In full and body nucleate.

Then all the earliest trees  
Hang out upon the breeze  
Their perfumed greeneries.

In the vexed heaven of the mind  
You 've seen a fresh, radiant wind  
Clear all and set in order fair  
The gray untextured vapors there.  
Then quick from every part  
The towering fancies start  
In frame and form of art.

## POEMS

### XV

#### TO A PINE-TREE

IF I could stand in such a plain,  
With such bright sap in every vein ;  
Could throw upon so blue an air,  
Branches so light and strong and fair ;

If I could sink my roots so deep  
In darkness where the spirits creep,  
So broadly base, so firmly rear  
My stem in such an atmosphere ;

If I could balance and reveal  
So utterly from head to heel  
The music I was born to be,  
In strophe and antistrophe ;

Thou 'dst not more nobly stand and shine  
Than I, proud Atlantean pine.

### XVI

#### O P A L

P ALE as a pearl the morning lay  
In cloud diaphanous and gray ;  
While slow the smothered sun goes by  
A smouldering opal in the sky.

## POEMS

Faint color in the wood he throws  
Like scattered petals of a rose ;  
And lays by every stem a hue  
Most sagely, delicately blue.

### XVII

#### MORNING

**N**O T least, 't is ever my delight  
To drink the early morning light ;  
To take the air upon my tongue  
And taste it while the day is young.  
So let my solace be the breath  
Of morning, when I move to death.

### XVIII

**I** KNOW not what it is, but when I pass  
Some running bit of water by the way,  
A river brimming silver in the grass,  
And rippled by a trailing alder-spray,

Hold in my heart I cannot from a cry,  
It is so joyful at the merry sight ;  
So gracious is the water running by,  
So full the simple grass is of delight.

## POEMS

And if by chance a redwing, passing near,  
Should light beside me in the alder-tree ;  
And if, above the ripple, I should hear  
The lusty conversation of the bee,

I think that I should lift my voice and sing ;  
I know that I should laugh and look around,  
As if to catch the meadows answering,  
As if expecting whispers from the ground.

## XIX

### ANADYOMENE

**G**IVE o'er the strife ! The poet cries  
The maiden mercy, in whose eyes  
He sees the light of paradise.

Beyond the coppice, at the edge  
Where ends the poet's Privilege  
Along the lake, in June one day  
I sat to meditate this lay ;  
Wherein, forgetting Love, I planned  
To sing the sea and sky and land.  
And first, the picture — all the scene  
A dark uninterrupted green.  
No flower uplifted from the floor  
Breaks from the forest to the shore.

## POEMS

No daffodil that nods along  
The bloss'my banks of English song ;  
Myrtles nor roses, that entwine  
In many a fragrant Attic line,  
Here spring, to aid while I rehearse  
The homely numbers of my verse.  
Poppy nor violet is here,  
Where fern, with cornel and severe  
Bay, and the low-set laurel shine  
Beneath a sombre front of pine.  
Here as I lay among the brakes  
I watched the bright, green forest-snakes,  
The wasp go over, and the toad  
Sit undecided of his road ;  
And sudden, from a tufted top,  
The gray, silk-cinctured spider drop.  
Out of the high, benignant blue  
The earth a golden opiate drew.  
Low-lying, level waves of heat  
Along the glassèd waters beat.  
Each ashen stem and each green leaf  
Lay sunned asleep ; and every sheaf  
Of needles, glittering on the pines,  
Inwove the light in glancing lines,  
Until I too had slept, ere this,  
But for the chimes I would not miss.

What sound was there ? A chipping bird  
That idly in the bushes stirred ;

## POEMS

A locust droning in the brake ;  
The hum the darting midges make.  
What sound was there ? A sudden wind  
That caught the ripples from behind  
And kissed them as they ran ; that drove  
The whispering rout within the cave  
In rocks below me where I lay.  
You would have said 't was elves at play,  
With muffled hammers keeping time  
Beneath the wave in some cool chime  
On amber bells, — k-link, k-lunk,  
(With quiet joy the sound I drunk),  
K-link, k-lunk ! Now high, now low,  
The chimes came bubbling from below.  
If I could get into my rhymes  
The lapping music of the chimes,  
All men who read would run once more  
To hear the ripples on the shore.  
Then, as the last light wave of air  
Drew off in ebb and failure there,  
Fell back, and faintly, far away,  
Broke in the pines across the bay,  
Low on the fall and silence crept  
A sudden sound, then sank and slept.  
Again, in pulse and faint, awoke  
In matted leaves of pine and oak,  
Where through the jungle of the grass  
The armies of the emmets pass.

## POEMS

Then on that cess and failure came,  
As from a crypt and smothered flame,  
An incense, on the fall and swell  
Of every piny thurible.

No scent of rose or spices rare  
Perfumed the quiet courses there ;  
No scattered homely mint and thyme  
Wove in the sun an odorous rhyme ;  
But June upon the air abroad  
Summoned the soul of leaf and sod,  
Shot with the glamour, and divine  
With the o'er-mastering scent of pine.

Ah Summer, Summer ! Fragrant June,  
Sweet as a moth from the cocoon !  
My thoughts in winter come and go  
As aimless as the errant snow ;  
Or lie, by wind and weather pressed,  
A dumb conservator at best.  
But April comes, and to the plain  
They fall and labor with the rain ;  
Sing as they fall and fallen, jet  
Their life into the violet ;  
And measure, in this homely rune,  
The drowsy summer-song of June.

This was the picture ; this the green  
And golden magic of the scene ;  
The lapping music, and the boon

## POEMS

Delight of lotos-drowsy June,  
Ungraced and unadorned. Was heard  
No mellow-ringing song of bird ;  
No grace of woven grasses spread,  
With white and purple diaper'd  
Of blooms, to strike and snare the sense  
With jets of odorous frankincense.  
But peaceful as I lay and took  
These fancies down, (to make my book),  
Out of the lake, in spite of me,  
She rose, Anadyomene !

Give o'er the strife ! The poet cries  
The maiden mercy, in whose eyes  
He sees the light of paradise.  
She came, and shot through that dull clime  
Sharp scent of marjoram and thyme,  
Cool vervain, and the forest rang  
Quick with the song my own heart sang.  
She came, with love, and in one ray  
Redeemed the dulness of the day,  
Until the world, (sea, sky, and land),  
Lay in the hollow of her hand.

## POEMS

### XX

#### PROCESSIONAL

BENEATH the rooftree of the dark,  
Like Noah shut within the ark,  
I welcome from the waste of night  
The earliest olive-branch of light.

Like Jacob, I my load of sleep  
Cast off and see the angels creep,  
Processional in bright array  
Up the wide avenues of day ;

See with Isaiah one who flies  
From that high orient sacrifice,  
Who, with a live coal in his hand,  
Touches to voice th' unpurgèd land.

Then swift from hazel copse and brake  
The voices, voices, voices wake,  
In twilight woods, in choirèd bush,  
Antiphonal to the sweet thrush.

Like rain across the eastern hill  
The dropping harmonies distil,  
Or run upon the roseate sky  
In silver bars of melody.

## POEMS

The notes upon the chorded air  
Vibrate in thrilling pulse of prayer,  
And on my heart responses win,  
The harp without, the harp within.

Each morning on the walls of night  
Unfolds the oriflamme of light.  
Each morning westward with the sun,  
A tide of song, the voices run ;

A hint of that clear day of gold  
The dewy morn has aye foretold,  
When these fresh voices shall prolong  
An everlasting morning-song.

## XXI

### TO A BULL-FROG

**T**HOU hoarse Aristophanic mime,  
Grotesque Silenus of the slime,  
That dar'st to lift a comic voice  
Where thrushes worship and rejoice,

When I would build, apart from space,  
A simple shrine with simple grace,  
And lift the walls and arches there  
Of all that 's high-distilled and fair,

## POEMS

God knows, who is the architect  
Of all I summon and reject,  
Thy mask is there, and with the choir  
Thy hoary bass-note will aspire.

### XXII

#### ROSE IN GRAY

LIGHTLY moves the silver moon  
Through these glimmering nights of June,  
Lightly falls, and in the shine  
Of her moon-rays hyaline,  
Lifts the nightfall and the hush  
From the red rose on the bush,  
And the rose's heart discovers  
To her nightly wandering lovers

I could tell you, Phyllis dear,  
How the rose looked faint and clear  
In the moonlight ; how she burned  
Like the sacred fire inurned ;  
Distant, with the far-withdrawn  
Sweet shamefacedness of dawn ;  
Quaintly cool, with yet the glow  
Of a lamp through falling snow.

## POEMS

So ; but when I whisper, “ Sweet,  
Take my hand, come let us see ‘t,’ ”  
'T is the very smothered rose  
In your milk-white cheek that glows.

### XXIII

#### TO FLOWERS

VITAL breathings of delight  
Flush your cheeks with blue and gold,  
Painted bannerets of light,  
Picketed 'twixt cold and cold.

Yet with purpose bear ye must  
Seasoned cannikins of fruit,  
Ere the red autumnal rust  
Crinkles downward to the root.

This your little year, as ours,  
Blossoms cannot make sublime.  
Ye are rooted in the hours,  
Ye are passengers of time.

## POEMS

### XXIV

#### ON COMING OF AGE

THROUGH days wherein I heard no purpose  
    speak,  
Through years that passed me as a quiet stream,  
I dreamed and did not seek ; to-day I seek  
    Who may no longer dream.

### XXV

IT is long waiting for the dear companions,  
The friends that come not, though God knows I  
    need them.  
I smile and wait ; and yet  
    The heart will fret.

A white cloud in the east is shining ; sadly  
I see ; my heart is all too full of longing,  
    With the old-time delight  
    To view the sight.

Wherfore I turn and in the eyes of women,  
In the strong hands of men, seek compensation.  
    My prayer begins and ends,  
    God give me friends.

## POEMS

### XXVI

MARY, when the wild-rose  
Blossomed on the vine,  
Hearts were light, eyes were bright,  
But none so bright as thine.

Lightly the month of May,  
Sweet bud of June,  
Opened like a rose in gray,  
Under the moon.

When the heart of summer  
Withered with rust,  
Bitter blows laid the rose  
Broken in the dust.

Crystal wells, amber wells,  
On the hills of blue,  
Chiming like silver bells  
When the heart is true,

Boom with the billows  
On the black shore ;  
Sweetness to bitterness  
Forevermore.

## POEMS

Sweetly the waters ran,  
(Wild rose for thee);  
The fountains of the heart of man  
Are bitter like the sea.

### XXVII

#### IN A GARDEN

**S**WEET, my Sweet, by the winding-water  
Sit and sing as the days go by.  
(What if the sounding sea had taught her  
Lust of life and the fear to die!)

Here in the circuit thou hast drawn  
Consult the mayflower and the dew;  
And peace attend thee on the lawn,  
Beneath a sky forever blue.

The green be grateful to thine eyes,  
The blue a benediction be;  
The waters bless thee where they rise;  
But look not downward to the sea.

A limpid source of water, silver  
Bubbling up through golden sand,  
Leads, ah! down to the rolling river,  
Down, ah, down! to the sounding strand.

## POEMS

There the waves on the shifting margent,  
    Night and day with a rhythmic roar,  
Beat and batter the black and argent  
    Reef and rock of the sullen shore.

Spring will rise with a broken wing,  
    Crippled in leaf and bud and stem ;  
The winding-water cease to sing,  
    The dawn will drop her diadem,

When thou but once beyond the pale  
    Hast learned to look, or dared to see  
The sunrise shattered in the gale,  
    The brazen terror of the sea.

Rather, at rest in what is thine,  
    Sip thou the honey as it flows,  
Nor lift thy wing above the line,  
    A blind bee in a garden-close.

## POEMS

### XXVIII

#### NEPTUNIAN

MIDWAY the height of one sheer granite  
rock

I sat in face of the barbarian sea,  
And heard the god, out of the dreadful, deep,  
Midmost Atlantic summoning strength and here,  
In accents clear above the sullen roar  
Of all his waves, condemn the jutting world.

“ Populous Egypt was a realm and ruled  
By men that strove when Greece was yet unborn.  
I strive not, yet is Pharaoh deep in death,  
And still the seas sweep unpeased and new.  
Kings were ere Priam. Knew ye not? I hold  
The substance, in my swift and solvent brine,  
Of all the race since Adam, and of strange,  
Unfeatured men ere Paradise. And I  
Sang to them all and cradled them and drank  
Their breath, their dust, their family and fame.  
Earth the grain-giver in my hands I hold,  
And if I will I love and if I will  
Hate, and I know no master but the sun,  
Who drinks the years up in a thin blue flame.  
From me the rivers and the rain from me  
Lead down their due-returning silver streams  
In circuit just; and all the gulfs are mine

## POEMS

Beneath the earth that echo of the deep.  
Laugh then, be glad ! E'en though I swallow down,  
To rock upon my oozy floor, the hulls  
Of odd ten thousand hurrying ships. They swell  
And mantle o'er with all the amorous life  
Ye reck not of, and in a year are gone.  
Laugh and be glad ! Tremble and fear ! I beat,  
Beneath the shining forward of the dawn,  
The dim high noon, and the red stars at night,  
Daylight and dark forever I beat, I beat  
The bulwarks of the shore, daylight and dark,  
With the blue night about me and the dawn.”

On billow billow rolling, in the press  
Confounded of the furious, following surge,  
Thunders the Deep, intolerant and sublime ;  
Gray-heart and grim to spurn of this black rock  
The temerarious front, and here to wrench  
The frame of earth aside before the sea.

## XXIX

### SHAKESPEARE

**T**HROUGH time untimed, if truly great,  
a Name  
Reverence compels and, that forgotten, shame.  
But in the stress of living you shall scan,  
Yea, touch and censure, great or small, the Man.

## POEMS

### XXX

#### THE WATER-CLOCK

EVER with fainter pulse and throw  
The heart's red clepsydra will flow.  
Then lest the drops run on to waste,  
Make haste, for love of life, make haste !

### XXXI

WE welcome lightly and with ease  
The gifts which providence foresees.  
But relish more the sudden grants  
Of unexpected circumstance.

### XXXII

#### IN AUGUST

WHEN the petal falls and lies  
Wrinkled like a leaf that dies,  
When the flower that once was merry  
Sobers to the russet berry,  
When the rose and hawthorn draws  
Slowly down to hips and haws,  
'T is the season birds are mute,  
'Twixt the flower and the fruit.

## POEMS

### XXXIII

#### DOG-DAYS

EVERY morning dies the sun  
On the eastern horizon,  
And a blazing god is born  
From the white egg of the morn.

Then the chorus that saluted  
Rosy-fingered dawn is muted,  
And the spirits of the earth  
Shrink beneath that fiery birth.

Underneath the green they lie  
Where a water-brook goes by ;  
In a cowslip or, in turn,  
Couched below a fragrant fern.

You shall find them in the shadow  
Where the woodside meets the meadow ;  
Lift the arum, they are there  
Breathing some cool well of air ;

Waiting in the hopeful grass  
Till the fiery day shall pass,  
Till the flame is laid to rest  
On the red hearse of the west.

## POEMS

### XXXIV

THROUGH rain the forest, roof and floor,  
Is green as it was ne'er before.  
And, dense along the forest-track,  
The boles of trees were ne'er so black.

Each driving cataract of rain  
The picture dyes a deeper stain.  
Yet, though the black be blacker seen,  
More vivid glows the vital green.

### XXXV

#### FAGOTS

IN Autumn, as the year comes round,  
(The seasons fall without a sound),  
By slow and stealth an ashen hue  
Comes on the green, comes on the blue.

The sticks I burned beneath a larch  
The first bright day of tawny March,  
Gave out their heat and fell away  
Successive into rose and gray.

Thus covertly, and term by term,  
Like as the year, I grow infirm ;  
Thus spend my substance like the fire,  
And like the last cold ash expire.

## POEMS

### XXXVI

OCTOBER 10

**T**HIS cool white morning by the wall  
How welcome does the sunlight fall  
To the curled aster, with its blue  
Close-folded petals, out of view.  
They open shining to the sun,  
As if their year had just begun ;  
Nor guess, (prophetic in the blast),  
That this warm day may be the last.

### XXXVII

*For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are  
your ways my ways, saith the Lord.*

**G**OD, thou art good, but not to me.  
Some dark, some high and holier plan  
Is hid beyond the world with thee.  
To the immortals, not to man,  
God, thou art good.

I do conceive thee wholly wise,  
And good beyond the power of touch.  
Eternal lovingkindness lies  
In all thy purposes ; so much  
I do conceive.

## POEMS

I do confess in thee above,  
All that thy lovers have to thee  
Ascribed, of fellowship and love.  
The words of Jesus on the tree  
I do confess.

Into thy hands I do commend  
My spirit. All thy ways I trust ;  
In fear acknowledge to the end  
Thy will, and perish with the dust  
Into thy hands.

God, thou art good, but not to man.  
Thy purposes do not contain  
The mighty things I hope. Thy plan  
Looks past humanity and pain.  
God, thou art good.

## XXXVIII

### THE PINE-TREE

**W**HEN blood was in my heart like wine  
I crept beneath a branching pine ;  
With passion drank the piny breath  
And no thought further then than death.

## POEMS

Now blood is colder and instead  
I mind the liquor of the head,  
Wherein I see, as in a glass,  
    The pine decay, the season pass.

And I have known, with sudden sight,  
A shadow from the pine like night,  
And sorrowing breezes, verse by verse,  
    Lament above the spirit's hearse ;

And found some comfort, but not all,  
Where the red needles wove a pall,  
To mark through that dead carpet shine  
    The promise of a seedling pine.

## XXXIX

I DARE not think that thou art by, to stand  
And face omnipotence so near at hand !  
When I consider thee how must I shrink,  
How must I say, I do not understand,  
    I dare not think !

I cannot stand before the thought of thee,  
Infinite Fulness of Eternity !

So close that all the outlines of the land  
Are lost, — in the inflowing of thy sea  
    I cannot stand.

## POEMS

I think of thee, and as the crystal bowl  
Is broken and the waters of the soul

Go down to death within the crystal sea,  
I faint and fail when, (thou, the perfect whole),  
I think of thee.

### XL

#### THE ANCHOR

**A**S when, these autumn days, I ride  
Along the painted country-side,  
Meadow and way and wood go by,  
A never-ending race,  
But yet, beyond their passing, my  
Wachusett holds his place;

So let each wingèd month and year  
Sweep into place and disappear;  
In order seen and loved, be sure!  
Ere ends its period;  
But let, beyond them all, endure  
One year, and that be God.

### XLI

**T**HE frost has walked across my world,  
Has killed the sallops and has curled  
The ferns. Ah, Summer, at what cost,  
For harvest, you invite the frost!

## POEMS

### XLII

#### THE QUIET HARVEST

WITHIN a thicket ere the sun  
Was up, I heard a whisper run.  
Each bush and tree was bidding, now,  
Its yellow leaves forsake the bough.  
And each leaf, having had its day,  
Stepped down to earth the shortest way.

In April budding on the tree ;  
In hot July full-blown and free ;  
October bids them no more be.  
I had, I think, as fair a spring ;  
July let equal fortune bring ;  
God give as quiet harvesting.

### XLIII

#### THE MAPLE-TREE

DAY after day I travel down  
From Billerica to the town ;  
Day after day, in passing by  
A cedar-pasture, gray and high,  
See, shining clear and far, (a mile),  
The white church-steeple of Carlisle ;  
And bright between Carlisle and me,  
Daily a glowing maple-tree.

## POEMS

Suffused with yellow, every part  
Is burning saffron at the heart.  
Upwards and warm the colors gain  
From ruddy gold to claret-stain;  
And downward tending, lightly lean  
To citron yellow and cold green.  
Day after autumn day it still  
More deeply burns against the hill.  
And now I've made of it a type  
Of hopes, like mine, near autumn-ripe,  
And watch, intent, which first shall be,  
The consummation of the tree,  
Or that gold harvest-hope prepared for me.

### XLIV

#### IN MEMORIAM.—PATSEY

**M**A XWELL, the master, built above  
His dog this testament of love,  
Where, on a granite block incised,  
These words told how the dog was prized :

“ Here Patsey lies, by bitter chance  
Dead ere his time, by fates unruly ;  
Stranger, regard this circumstance  
And solemn rite; we loved him truly.”

## POEMS

And quite as if 't had been a man,  
The slow foot of the moss began,  
Envious, to mar this simple state,  
And the poor name t' obliterate.

### XLV

**T**HE ivy leaves, (behind the shed),  
Turned bright and blushed a rosy red.  
Bit by the frost they sobered down,  
And now can show but russet-brown.  
Another frost and they will fall,  
And there will be no leaves at all.

Thus down, through scarlet, gray, and dun,  
The earth will fall into the sun.

### XLVI

#### GREEK AND CHRISTIAN

**M**AKE haste, my soul, the Wise Man whis-  
pered, go !  
Gather the golden ears before the snow ;  
There is no harvest after death. But low,  
The Shining One replied, It is not so.

## POEMS

### XLVII

#### DISSOLUTION

**T**HE leaf will fall, through green and gold,  
To dissolution in the mould.

The tree will fall, and in the sod  
Complete its final period.

The night will die when one bright ray  
Shoots up and beckons in the day.

And that bright ray in turn will lie  
Coffined with all bright things that die;

Swept out to space, when on this shore  
Leaf, tree, the earth, (which all upbore),  
And day and night shall be no more.

### XLVIII

#### NOVEMBER

**T**HE sun, this old November,  
Across the sodden slope,  
May bid the heart remember,  
But cannot bid it hope.

## POEMS

### XLIX

#### AGAINST FORGIVENESS

**W**E do not ask to be forgiven,  
Nor out of earth to win  
An unpremeditated heaven,  
Nor quit the claim of sin.

Our acts be on our head. As yet  
While masterful we live,  
The world we ask not to forget,  
Nor ask God to forgive.

### L

#### CONFESSON

**I**N Adam's sin  
Did I begin.

With toil and sweat  
My bread I get ;  
At once, with Abel  
Spread my table,  
Rebel with Cain  
And sin again.

## POEMS

O'er all the earth,  
(Which is my birth),

I joy to find  
My human kind ;

Read in the sky  
That I must die,

Yet needs must sing  
When it is spring.

And though I run  
Before the sun,

By autumn brought  
To steady thought,

I still rehearse  
The primal curse,

And in the snow  
Confess my woe.

Yet here apart,  
Deep in my heart,

Kin to the sod  
I wait for God.

## POEMS

### LI

#### NOVEMBER-BLIND

IN this November though I bend  
My heart I cannot find a friend  
About the wood. The green is down  
From water-mead to forest crown ;  
(Save where the myrtle in the lane  
Paints the gray sod an emerald stain ;  
Save where the pines below the hill  
Glow with the suns of summer still).  
The hardy juniper to dust  
Corrodes in this autumnal rust.  
The goldenrod and aster-head  
Are black and broke and more than dead.  
This morning, fog about the height  
Creeps up and chokes the growing light ;  
Lies like a blanket through the wood,  
And doubly trebles solitude.  
And when the sun above the mist  
Shall clear a space of amethyst,  
He too shall hunt, November-blind,  
A friend about the wood to find.

## POEMS

### LII

#### WINTER A CAVERN

THROUGH dim November down as through  
an arch,  
I move in cavern darkness until March ;  
Whence looking back, I can no more remember,  
For joy, the days sinister since November.

### LIII

#### ON A WEED UNCOVERED BY THE RAINS IN DECEMBER

IN all its grace This was the Solomon's Seal,  
When summer shone. Now winter glooms,  
and here  
On flower and stalk has set his iron heel.  
Another year, my life, another year !

### LIV

#### DECEMBER

NEW friends forbear, and let old friends  
remember  
With pity him who ends his course to-day ;  
Nor heap with scorn his grave in dead December  
Whose life bore golden promises in May.

## POEMS

### LV

#### ISAIAH VI: 13

“**A**s a teil-tree or an oak,”  
So the ancient prophet spoke,  
“ Whose heart remaineth when they shed  
Their leaves ! ” The prophet now is dead,  
But on a girl his mantle falls  
And heartens other funerals.

December stood in confidence,  
Winter long had pitched his tents,  
When she and I together came  
Along a way without a name;  
And there she bade me lift my head  
The while those verses old she said.

A knotted oak above the snow  
I saw within a pasture grow ;  
A sturdy tree, not over high,—  
Some several inches more than I.  
His leaves were gone, but in the air  
His branches other beauty wear.

About him little whips of wind  
A wreath of winter sunlight bind.

## POEMS

The snow upon his feet is cold,  
But in his heart is more than gold.  
And light that only winter knows  
Springs up to blossom on the snows.

### LVI

#### NEW ENGLAND

**W**HOE'ER thou art, who walkest there  
Where God first taught my feet to roam,  
Breathe but my name into the air,  
I am content, for that is home.

A sense, a color comes to me,  
    Of baybushes that heavy lie  
With juniper along the sea,  
    And the blue sea along the sky.

New England is my home ; 't is there  
    I love the pagan sun and moon.  
'T is there I love the growing year,  
    December and young-summer June.

I'd rather love one blade of grass  
    That grows on one New England hill,  
Than drain the whole world in the glass  
    Of fortune, when the heart is still.

## POEMS

### LVII

#### SERENE

**T**HIS crystal sapphire of the sky  
Is saner far than you and I,  
Who in our passions and our dreams  
Run evermore to wild extremes.

The pure perfection of the sea  
Lies not in mirth and tragedy ;  
But like the silence of the snows  
In breadth of beauty and repose.

God give one moment, ere we die,  
As crystal clear as the blue sky,  
Serene as ocean, white as snow,  
And glowing as the heavens glow.

### LVIII

**F**ROM Billerica forth I send  
My book. Pray take it for a friend.  
Or should it chance offend you, know  
It is not willingly your foe.



POSTHUMOUS POEMS



A.D. MDCCCCI



# I

NOT all the world can banish from my eyes  
The simple glories of the day's sunrise ;  
Not circumstance nor fate e'er drive away  
The clear perfection of one summer day,  
Nor blot quite wholly from my sight  
The singing tumult of the mystic night.

# II

## FOR MARCH 20

NOW colored lights of morning rise  
And paint the skies  
With warmer dyes,  
A thousand times  
More bright, more rare  
As summer climbs  
The northern stair ;  
To where,  
Expecting them with joy and song,  
(Though winter still be on the hill),  
Sits March, his verdant vale along,  
And pipes for Summer with a will.

Bright jets of flame, the crocus buds  
Out of their beds  
Lift up their heads ;

## POSTHUMOUS POEMS

Then with a spring  
Above the mold,  
Each purple wing,  
Each wing of gold,  
Unfold ;  
Bright correspondents in the grass  
Of that high incandescent sun,  
Whose bending angels, as they pass,  
Light up the flowers one by one.

### III

**T**HE faithful mullein, day by day,  
Is up and out beside the way,  
Or on the upland pasture blows  
Beside the rockrose and the rose.

Would heaven had granted me a grace  
One half so perfect as thy face,  
Compounded of so pure a metal  
As thy five-foliate golden petal.

### IV

#### A MARCH FLAW

**T**HE fickle wind, by ebb and flaw,  
Wavers uncertain as a girl :  
The fire delays and will not draw :  
The smoke creeps out in lip and curl ;

## POSTHUMOUS POEMS

Will not adventure in the skies,  
But level on the pasture lies,  
As if it sought and could not find  
A purpose equal to its mind.

### V

**H**ERE by the brimming April streams,  
Here is the valley of my dreams.

Every garden place is seen  
Starting up in flames of green;

Breaking forth in yellow gold  
Through the blanket of the mold.

Slow unfolded, one by one,  
Lantern leaves hang in the sun,

Like the butterflies of June  
Weak and wet from the cocoon.

## POSTHUMOUS POEMS

### VI

THE bobolink that sweetly sings  
Although the rain is on his wings ;  
The light in darkness of the moon  
That builds by night another noon ;

Mine, mine, mine, all mine !  
The golden light in the sunset pine ;  
The flush green heart of the maple spray  
When the sap comes up in the month of May ;  
The multitudinous, close advance  
Of the singing grass and the little plants ;  
The deep, resilient, lusty feel  
Of the turf carpet under heel ;  
And a wakened heart, that lifts and fills  
Like meadows in the April hills,  
Or when the bottom and the plain  
Are filled with the autumnal rain.

### VII

## APPLE-BLOSSOMS

LET men remember, when they pray,  
The rose and silver dawns of May,  
Most palely, spiritually gray ;

## POSTHUMOUS POEMS

The sky above the blossomed trees,  
Pale as December Arctic seas,  
Pure as the white anemones.

. . . . .

On such a morning, lightly swung  
By the chance song a bluebird sung,  
The silence like an incense hung.

A rod away, you 'd scarcely know  
If these were apple-blooms ablow  
Or a reverted April snow;

But over all the sentient earth  
Young lantern-leaves, for joy of birth,  
Hung out the saffron hues of mirth.

The honeysucker wove his loom  
Of busy noise from plume to plume  
Of rosy-clustered apple-bloom.

Went by the bee; the butterfly  
On soft and papery wings went by,  
Beneath his low, sufficient sky.

And on a sudden flaw and swell,  
If 't were a petal white that fell,  
Or a blown moth, you 'd hardly tell,

## POSTHUMOUS POEMS

So soft the air, so hung with scents  
That fell from these white, flowery tents  
On odorous beds of innocents.

The church bells, by the distance drowned,  
Came to me like the ghost of sound,  
Soft-choired with birds that sang around;

And dim as distance were the blue  
Slopes, and the hills I thought I knew,  
Behind the mist, and shining through.

## VIII

**R**OLL down, roll down, thou darkling earth,  
To the eastern shores of light,  
Where the plashing waves of the morning's birth  
Sweep up the coasts of night.

## IX

**H**OT days like this will wound or bless,  
At home as in the wilderness.  
The wind, with burning feet,  
Lingers along the wheat ;

## POSTHUMOUS POEMS

The honeysuckle droops;  
The scarlet poppy stoops,  
And on the garden-bed  
Lays down her silken head.

So in the mountain walk  
Of untrod Moosilauke  
The purple orchis turns  
Black, and the cornel burns.  
Through the dead banks of haze  
The tongues of heaven blaze ;  
And life draws down from flower and shoot,  
To lie in secret at the root.

## X

**W**ORN with the city, out I go,  
Where the cool green plantations grow ;  
With curious eye observe the shine  
Of silver on the stalwart pine,  
The beech and oak ; on the granite fells  
See the sharp cedar-sentinels  
Advance, each one a shafted thyrse,  
Cone-capped, among the javelin firs.  
Involved by barriers, and perplexed,  
By mere unyielding pavement vexed,  
In spirit from the town I run  
To meet the gracious horizon,

## POSTHUMOUS POEMS

Which patient round my centre lies  
With axle pointed in the skies;  
In th' unblockaded blue to find  
A clean refreshment for the mind.

### XI

#### OCTOBER 10

SUCH days as this I 've but to look  
And add a page more to my book.  
A bramble, winding o'er the wall,  
A scarlet torrent in the Fall ;  
Sere, yellow leaves, whirled by the train,  
To scatter in a golden rain ;  
A crumpled fern ; — it is enough,  
For all the world is poet's stuff,  
And shall contribute to his book,  
So 't gives the joy the poet took.

### XII

#### ON THE TENTH OF OCTOBER

YOU'LL not believe the aspen leaf  
(Whose season you would say was brief)

Hangs long and greener on the tree  
Than sycamore, than hickory.

## POSTHUMOUS POEMS

The elm-leaf crumbles brown ; the oak  
Is even sooner gray and broke.

The maple reddens, and the ash  
Leaps up and falls at Autumn's lash ;

The aspen leaf will longest stay,  
Be sure ; I saw them green to-day.

### XIII

UP from hill and meadow burning,  
Fumes of Autumn in the air ;  
Birds in dusty blue returning,  
Passing on their southern fare.

Color, color, scent and savor,  
How they penetrate the heart,  
Wake the old delicious quaver ; —  
That is Nature, that is Art.

### XIV

THREE camping grounds I passed to-day,  
Where, in the months gone by,  
We sat to watch the kettle boil,  
And watch the bacon fry.

## POSTHUMOUS POEMS

To-day the needles on the place  
Have fallen thick and sere.  
Ah ! we are growing old apace,  
Year falling after year.

Where we were born, and where we die,  
Or where we sat at pot,  
Oblivion, like the leaves, shall lie,  
And cover up the spot.

## XV

### PRAYER FOR GRACE

THE eager frost through all the night  
The oak and walnut leaves did bite.  
To-day the sun, across the dell,  
Shone on them warmly, and they fell.  
Each leaf, the scarlet and the yellow,  
Lay quietly beside his fellow.

Pray when the frost shall find in place  
Me, I may fall with such a grace,  
And come as quickly to my place.

## POSTHUMOUS POEMS

### XVI

#### IN NOVEMBER

JUNIPER gentle and rosemarie !  
There's neat brown cones on the yellow larch,  
With scarlet haws on the gray thorn-tree.  
Ah, the year is long since the first of March !

A leaf is welcome along the lane,  
Periwinkle and wintergreen.  
But they sleep asleep in the icy rain,  
And the wreck of summer is gray between.

Shafted bennets above the mat  
Of the sodden grass, in the steady wind  
Whistle a warning caveat,  
As the hoarse gray month comes on behind.

A hungry gull, blown in from sea,  
Comes swift and fierce like a sudden Sin.  
The cold rain creeps on the leafless tree.  
Ah well ! let beautiful death begin.

## POSTHUMOUS POEMS

### XVII

**W**HAT is this stone, unless some cry  
Shall echo back and give it life?  
'T is not enough that it be rife  
With history, with history.

### XVIII

**A**BEETLE bug has bit my coat  
And ta'en a crescent moon,  
Whether to muffle round his throat  
Or felt a pair of shoon.  
God knows I do not want the part.  
He's welcome to 't with all my heart !

Only, poor bug, I bid him 'ware  
November fierce and free!  
The biting frost will soon be here  
To bite more sharp than he.  
If he 'll return, he shall have wool  
To round the crescent moon to full.

## POSTHUMOUS POEMS

### XIX

WHAT hard, bright Spirit sits beyond the stars,  
On what high seat beyond the round of space ?  
With what benignant, what pernicious face  
Views he the blood, the laughter, and the scars ?

We may not reach beyond our prison bars.  
He will not bend to touch us in our place.  
We can but lift our heads and strive to trace  
His handiwork in what he makes or mars.

Nay, imperturbable, with other wars  
Engaged than ours, "I set you in your ways  
Of old," he says ; "prate to me not nor praise,  
But build what joy you may behind your bars."

In the cold light of evening, or of thought,  
Basalt and adamant he seems, with aught  
More hard, more cold, than ice or emerald ;  
Who says, "I have not heard of heaven or hell" ;  
Benign, pernicious, imperturbable,  
"I Am" alike by Greek and Hebrew called.

## POSTHUMOUS POEMS

### XX

#### DAVID AND JONATHAN

'T IS man with man in the bitter end  
Whatever the love and the heart of woman ;  
Iron with iron, friend with friend,  
The tearless eye and the handclasp human.

### XXI

#### THE MYSTIC

"A ND so," I said, much after having striven,  
"We mount close upward to the bar of  
heaven ;  
But all our strength is spent upon the road,  
And cannot take the gift when it is given.

Doubt is our attitude of mind from birth ;  
We cannot see, for memories of earth ;  
We cannot breathe the rich and rarer air,  
To know the beauty and account the worth."

"And yet," one said, "you will not dare to say  
A man is free to turn his face away,  
Heedless of all the other friends of God,  
And selfishly pursue a silent way !

## POSTHUMOUS POEMS

Surely the earth must ever find a place ;  
Surely the human claim is no disgrace.””  
—“But he must free himself who dares to mount  
The highest heaven and ask to see God’s face.””

### XXII

**W**HEN the last candle is put out,  
And darkness gray falls round about,  
Shall we lie placid as to-night  
In a blank void of sound and sight ?  
Or in the darkness shall we die,  
Screaming, and all the heart a lie ?

### XXIII

**W**HAT are the limitations hard,  
Importunate, of time and space,  
But fences of the prison-yard  
Of earth, to keep us in our place ?

Like snares they catch us at the gate.  
I beat my eager wings in vain.  
Like some caged bird I learn to wait  
Till death shall set me free again ;

## POSTHUMOUS POEMS

Content to live awhile with these,  
The wards that keep me from the air,  
So at the end I reach the trees  
Of God, and find my freedom there.

### XXIV

TO G. S.

[ON A POSTAL CARD]

If one lack a new coat  
One may still have a sister!  
Like an oar to a boat,  
Which without it would float,  
Yet not be a good boat—  
Ah, I ought to have kissed her!  
If one lack a new coat  
One may still have a sister.

November 4, 1890.

## POSTHUMOUS POEMS

### XXV

#### THE CHICKADEE'S SONG

TO G. S.

**G**LIMPSED now and again in his pine-tree tower,  
A chickadee sang the soft hours away.  
And I could not hear what he had to say,  
    For I was sad,  
        And he was gay.  
    For he was glad,  
        And I had no power  
To hear in my heart what he had to say.

As he sang to the sun and the bright-eyed flowers  
And the golden air, all the world was gray.  
To me all was dead in the dreary day  
    For I was sad  
        And he was gay.  
    And he was glad,  
        As the dull-eyed hours  
Rrolled on to the close of the dreary day.

For the eyes of the one alone with the power  
To brighten and lighten the black-cap's play  
Passed me by and were turned away.

## POSTHUMOUS POEMS

So I was sad,  
Though the bird was gay;  
Though he was glad  
In his pine-tree tower;  
For her eyes passed me by and were turned away.

August 15, 1890.

### XXVI

TO G. S.

WHAT shall I speak, what phrases here  
compose,  
To tell the love that gathers close, and flows  
Up to the very lips, but cannot pass?

I love you, and it is for more than this  
That you have suffered. Where no fruitage is,  
And naught there seems put forth, the very tree  
Itself, entire, a noble fruit may be.

Life is but life, and who the secret finds  
Of living as you live, in silence binds  
(For God and those of us who understand)  
About her brows a halo from the hand  
Of Christ himself, and bears a lily wand.

1891.

158

## POSTHUMOUS POEMS

### XXVII

TO G. S.

PRAY God to give me power to keep  
Life's cureless evils out of sight ;  
Nor wander o'er the world and weep  
The things I cannot do aright.

Let Manfred's load be bitter-borne,  
And Werther cowardly outpour  
His sorrows on the world. . . . I scorn  
To add one weight to weakness more.

October, 1892.

### XXVIII

TO H. L. S.

I WANDERED on a lonely quest ;  
And deep within a dark forest  
That lightened upward to the sky  
A maiden, with her head borne high,  
Went lightly by.

## POSTHUMOUS POEMS

A bending shape, a glancing eye,  
Long slender limbs borne maidenly,  
Bound golden hair,—she trembled lest  
She fright the butterfly at rest  
On either breast.

So she went on into the west  
Beyond the dark-green, dim forest  
That fell to blackness — all the sky  
Closed down, — when on my lips felt I  
                        A butterfly !

XXIX

**T**HREE are women in London and Paris and  
Rome  
With the light of the sun in their hair,  
With the color of joy in their eyes and their lips,—  
But the one that I love is n't there.

The one that I love — ah well! . . .  
I know by the heart's reminder,  
By the leap in the throat and the spring in the  
blood  
The way I must follow to find her.

## POSTHUMOUS POEMS

'Tis bitter to gallop in Rotten Row  
With the prettiest English girl  
When your heart's afloat on the western sea  
Where Atlantic breakers curl.

Then out of a hundred thousand ways  
One way lies shining and bright,  
One way out under the western stars  
To the feet of my heart's delight.

## XXX

**D**AY by day along the street  
Many a girl I see is sweet ;  
But the lips that should be ripe,  
Pallid like the Indian-pipe.

These, devoted and forlorn,  
Brave to work and brave to mourn,  
When the world is full of guile  
Think to conquer with a smile.

Every day I meet some maid  
Born, it seems, to be betrayed ;  
All the substance of desire  
Burning with a paltry fire.

## POSTHUMOUS POEMS

These for brief and bitter passion,  
Like the poppy, God will fashion ;  
    And the first rough wind that blows  
Lays them broken down in rows.

Phyllis, when you see the frail  
Fall, and courage not avail,  
    Is your true heart not dismayed  
At the fortune of a maid ?

## XXXI

THE world is crossed at sixes and at sevens,  
    Athwart with love.  
Behind their crystal bars  
The silver stars  
Ache in their separate heavens,  
And only these  
Dear human hands on earth have ease.  
To-night indeed I pity the poor trees  
Even in the grove ;  
For though their branches mingle,  
Inwoven and crossed a moment by the breeze,  
Each is forever single.

## POSTHUMOUS POEMS

### XXXII

LOVE is a life you cannot trace  
Nor find by gazing in the face.  
You cannot sum it, pence by pence,  
Nor find it in its elements.

### XXXIII

[*From the French.*]

THE spring has not so many flowers,  
The yellow shore so many sands,  
So many silver drops the showers  
As I have sorrows at your hands.

### XXXIV

DEAR heart, that in this world must live and  
die,  
And love, and fix your faith on one to love you,  
How should I live, to think it were not I,  
To stand beside, and touch and hold and prove  
you.

## POSTHUMOUS POEMS

### XXXV

THE hollow chambers of the moon,  
The purple barrens of the deep,  
Do not so cruel silence keep  
As you who put your heart to sleep.

Believe me, gold is not more pure,  
The oak more steadfast in the wind,  
The sun a flame more strong and sure  
Than is the purpose of his mind  
Who steels his heart to find you so unkind.

### XXXVI

THE shad-bush, sweetheart, is in flower,  
And tells her secret hour by hour.  
A silent secret she imparts,  
The fragrance of her heart of hearts,  
Unguessed save by the initiate bee  
And you, as yours, sweetheart, by me.

### XXXVII

WECK of the winter upcast into April.  
Buds? — no buds on the bough as yet.  
Only a hope and a promise of summer  
To spring through the wet.

## POSTHUMOUS POEMS

Just last night, as the air like water  
Hung, and softened the rigid close,  
Came December down out of the mountains,  
And the lilacs froze.

Ice, like glass, was on all the forest ;  
Shut like a lid on the steaming brook.  
Blood, that sprang from the heart-roots under,  
The willows forsook.

So, once more, dear heart, but only  
Once, is the blossom of life betrayed.  
Heart, dear heart, as I love you, tell me  
You are not afraid.

## XXXVIII

**M**Y sisters have their loves, but I  
Am all alone, she said.  
And oh ! the weary wonder Why.  
And oh ! that I were dead.  
Ai me for life and love ! she saith.  
She says, I am in love with death.

Ai me ! for love is very sweet,  
And hearts are warm to wed ;  
But burn to ashes in defeat  
And loneliness, she said.

## POSTHUMOUS POEMS

Ai me ! And with her wasting breath  
She says, I am in love with death.

And when my couch they shall prepare,  
    And come for me, she said,  
They'll bring white roses for my hair,  
    And not the roses red.  
Ai me, for life and love ! she saith.  
She says, I am in love with death.

## XXXIX

### RED ROSE AND WHITE

A RED rose climbed to the casement ;  
Cried, “ Open to me !  
My cry is the call of the passing years,  
I ask for love and the dew of tears  
Withheld by thee.”

I broke the rose at the casement ;  
    Cried, “ Welcome to thee.”  
Ah, red rose dead ! but I could not know  
That only the pale white rose would blow  
    On earth for me.

## POSTHUMOUS POEMS

### XL

I MARK you coming the accustomed way,  
As light as grace, your head uplift and high,  
Gray subtlety of flame in either eye,  
Your hair blown golden by the windy spray;  
And bright about you, darting with the play  
Of beams of tint most delicate and shy,  
A light such as above the eastern sky  
Heralds the dayspring and adorns the day;

Such crown as, when the gates of June unclose,  
Plays like the veil of rose about the rose ;  
A snare, of grain so delicate, so mighty,  
Not Ares, not Adonis might prevail.  
Thou art the goddess of the golden veil,  
Mistress of men, the woman Aphrodite.

### XLI

THE extreme beauty and the dear delight,  
Wherewith the world accosts me as I go,  
Catch up the heart, and like a flake of snow  
Ethereal, it dances in the light.  
The music-voices of the day and night  
Charm utterly. In truth, I never know  
Another wish, before the various show  
And concert of the hearing and the sight !

## POSTHUMOUS POEMS

Yet were I most unhappy if alone  
Beauty without I courted and adored.  
O tyrant Love, peace, then; the world is dumb!  
I hear my lady calling and I come.  
For love within o'er love without is lord,  
And calls us with a look, a touch, a tone.

## XLII

I LAUGH for the long days I see ahead,  
Stretching in yellow light where we shall walk,  
And pluck the full-blown roses from the stalk,  
And mallows pale, and poppies deep and red.  
I strive no more. Why, love, my feet are led.  
I have forgot the fears and haste that balk,  
And like a child that's newly learned to talk  
Tell the new joy whereby I'm comforted.

For, dear, you taught me, by your graciousness,  
My highest skill was to be most myself,  
No turn-coat Ghibelline but the true Guelf,  
Filling his faults and virtues to the brim;  
No more than faithful to himself, no less  
Than true to her who will be true to him.

## POSTHUMOUS POEMS

### XLIII

[*Fragment of a Sonnet, found in a note-book.*]

**I**N company . . . with vital hands  
You shape the stuff which is our life, and measure  
With equal pulse our golden warp of pleasure,  
Our scarlet woof of pain, in scarlet strands.  
As if, o'erwearied in a hundred lands,  
Young Aphrodite's self, undone with leisure,  
Should wield the distaff and the silken treasure  
Which Clotho only . . . understands.  
Then, Aphrodite, sister-star and wife,  
Incomprehensible, enact the god.  
Favor at least one mortal with your nod.  
He only has enough who has to spare.  
Bless me with the sweet torment of your life,  
Your love, and the dear wonder of your hair.

### XLIV

**W**HEN Love dies, and the funeral plumes  
are set,  
And mourners come to take you by the hand,  
Regard them not; they do not understand  
Who bid you bless your sorrow and forget.  
When Love has died (if Love should die!) regret

## POSTHUMOUS POEMS

Will bind you broken in the former land,  
And warp your life with one supreme command  
To tend the dead in love's dark oublie.

For you have loved, and all your life is altered.  
And you have lost, and appetite unfed  
Will drive you seeking solace with the dead.  
Be there your life; and know that, having faltered,  
You seek among the living folk in vain.  
For love is dead. You shall not meet again.

## XLV

**S**WAMPSCOTT over the eastern sea,  
And the western wall of the sea is Lynn;  
And stroke by stroke on the shingle  
The waves come pounding in;  
Bitter waves of the bitter sea,  
With a music all their own,  
With the awful charm of the Gorgon  
In the look of them and the tone.  
And every wave gave up its soul,  
That passed in a gusty breath,—  
A pulse in the air, that stirred my hair,  
And whispered “Death.”





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